

**Comintern 7th World
Congress Part 4: The
Fight Against War
and Fascism**

Ercoli (Palmiro Togliatti)
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SEVENTH WORLD CONGRESS OF
THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

ERCOLI
**The Fight Against
War and Fascism**

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Report on the Third Point of the Agenda of the Congress :
"The Preparations for Imperialist War and the Tasks
of the Communist International" (August 13-14, 1935)
and Reply to the Discussion (August 17, 1935).

Chairman : M. THOREZ

THOREZ : I declare the session open. Comrade Ercoli has the floor for the report on the third point of the agenda : "The Preparations for Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communist International."

[The whole Congress greets Comrade Ercoli's appearance on the platform with thunderous applause. All rise and give him an ovation. The Chairman, Comrade Thorez, cries : "Long live the leader of the Italian proletariat, Comrade Ercoli, one of the best leaders of the Comintern ! " Applause.]

Comrades, the problems of war and the struggle against war have always been in the forefront of the attention of the Communist International and the work of our Parties. "*Remember the imperialist war*" declares the first appeal which our International issued to the toilers of the whole world. This call for a struggle against war was again stressed by our Fifth World Congress and was renewed with special intensity in 1927 and the following years, at the time when all the objective conditions for the outbreak of a new imperialist war had matured and the capitalist world was beginning to slide into a new world war. Since that time we have regarded the danger of a new war as an *imminent* danger, we have appealed to the proletariat and the wide masses of toilers to fight against this danger and we have given all possible support to any mass movement which has developed on the basis of a genuine struggle against imperialist war.

As in all other spheres, the outlook determined on the basis of a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the mutual relations in the capitalist world has been confirmed by the course of events. And to-day who would dare to doubt that if the outbreak of war has been delayed, if it has been possible to avoid the attack on the Soviet Union which was being prepared for 1930-31 by some big imperialist Powers (not without the benevolent aid of some of the leaders of international Social Democracy), this has been due also to the fact that we sounded the alarm and that a considerable section of the working class heard our appeal and responded to it.

In 1928, our Sixth World Congress worked out our general line

for the struggle against war. This line, which has already passed through its ordeal by fire, remains our basic line. But profound changes have taken place in the international situation since the Sixth World Congress, especially during the last few years. A new repartition of the world by means of armed force has begun in the Far East. The mutual relations between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world have entered into a new phase as the result of the victory which Socialism has attained here, in the country of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

New possibilities have opened up for the peace policy of the Soviet Union. The connection between the peace policy of the Soviet Union and the struggle of the workers, and of the toilers in general, for peace is demonstrated more plainly than it ever was before. At the same time, fascism has conquered in Germany and in a number of other countries, and the war danger has become so much intensified that it demands the greatest efforts on the part of the Communist vanguard and of the working class to bring together all the forces which can be mobilised for the struggle against the instigators of war and for the defence of peace and of the Soviet Union. Hence the demand arises that we should make some changes in our tactics in this field as well, taking into account the alterations which have arisen in the situation and in the relation of forces.

Comrade Lenin repeatedly warned us by persistently drawing our attention, and the attention of all workers, to the difficulties of the struggle against war. There is no such thing as "war in general," but there are concrete wars, the nature of which follows from the nature of the historical period in which they take place and the class relations obtaining in the world as a whole and in the warring countries in particular. This is why I consider that the task of our Congress, in its study of the problems of war and of struggle against war, is not to repeat what was said and done by the Sixth World Congress, but to examine and analyse with the greatest care all the new factors which have now arisen in the international situation and in the relations between classes and states, and which have an influence in fixing the character of the war which threatens us, and to draw from this analysis all the conclusions necessary for determining our tasks and establishing the prospects before us.

I. THE UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM IN THE YEARS OF THE CRISIS

The End of the Versailles and Washington Systems
There has never been and there cannot be stability in the

relations between the big capitalist Powers. It is rendered impossible owing to the law of the uneven development of capitalism. Comrade Stalin, in his concluding speech to the Seventh Plenum of the E.C.C.I., gave a full description of the way in which this law of the uneven development of capitalism manifests itself:

" . . . For the very reason that the backward countries are accelerating their development and are attaining the level of the most advanced countries, for this very reason the struggle becomes sharper for the supremacy of some countries over others, for this very reason the possibility arises for some countries to surpass others and to drive them from the markets, thereby creating the preconditions for armed conflicts, for weakening the world front of capitalism, for the rupture of this front by the proletarians in various capitalist countries."

The period of the world economic crisis and the depression of a special kind give us a special example of uneven development and show us the results of this unevenness of the development of capitalism in all spheres.

The leading imperialist Powers which emerged victoriously from the world war boasted that by the Versailles and Washington Treaties they had created lasting stability in international relations, and permanent order both on a European and world scale. Nothing of the kind happened.

The Versailles Treaty was based on the following points: —

1. The maintenance of the defeated countries, especially Germany, in a state of political inferiority, and their spoliation by the victor states;

2. An agreement between the victor states for dividing the spoils of war, for fixing the frontiers of Europe and for the distribution of colonies and colonial mandates in such a way as to establish their hegemony throughout the world;

3. The preparation of economic blockade and armed counter-revolutionary intervention against the country of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

For its part, the Washington Treaty established the relations of forces between the big naval Powers, especially in the Pacific Ocean, the Treaty considering the huge territory of China as an immediate field of expansion for the big imperialist brigands and seeking to regulate their desperate competition and struggle in connection with the conquest and plunder of Chinese territory.

From the outset it was found that it was impossible to realise a

large part of the clauses of these treaties. The plans for encircling and attacking the Soviet Republic were shattered by the heroic struggle of the Soviet workers and peasants and by the victory which they gained in the civil war, under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, and with the active support of the international proletariat.

It is important to note, however, that the contradictions also intensified between the victor Powers themselves that had imposed the post-war treaties; they were in mutual rivalry, and this rivalry was bound ultimately to smash up the whole system established by these post-war treaties.

When the crisis took place, the unevennesses of the development of capitalism became still further accentuated. There were sharp breaks and jumps. The countries which had experienced the most rapid rise and the greatest prosperity were the first to be thrown into the crisis and experienced its consequences most severely. In other countries, as was the case in France last year, the level of production fell just when the greater part of the capitalist world was already registering a rise. This creates new political instability and gives the development of international relations a feverish character which becomes accentuated year by year during the crisis.

Inside each country, the results of the crisis and the methods used by the ruling classes to find a way out of the crisis and to throw the cost of the crisis on to the backs of the toilers are of such character as to cause an increase in the aggressiveness of the imperialist bourgeoisie and an ever-greater tension in international relations. The enormous increase of unemployment, the reduction of wages, the impoverishment of the toiling peasantry, the lowering of the standard of living of all the toilers, with an extreme contraction of the home market in each country, give rise to an intensified struggle for foreign markets and sharpen competition on the world market to an extreme degree. On the other hand, the growth of the concentration of capital and monopolies (which in all countries is also speeded up by the crisis) helps to increase the imperialist aggressiveness of the bourgeoisie. In every country, the most reactionary elements of the bourgeoisie orientate themselves on war. These elements regard war as the best means, and, at a particular time, as the sole means of overcoming the difficulties produced by the crisis.

The following declaration, unprecedented in its frankness and cynicism, was to be read some months ago in a Swedish magazine:—

"War to-day is in no way different from what it was formerly. It will increase the demand for shipping, the risks of transport will grow, the prices of goods will also rise, speculation will grow stronger. . . . If on the contrary war does not come, the world will still have to wait for a long time for a natural improvement, because it is still far away."

This cynicism, in which we read the irrevocable condemnation of a regime which puts its hopes in destruction, death and war, is thoroughly characteristic of the state of mind created among the bourgeoisie by the crisis.

In the sphere of international economic relations, the most characteristic fact of the crisis is the shrinkage of trade, which has not disappeared but, on the contrary, has become more pronounced in the years of depression. This shrinkage is to a great extent the result of the tariff barriers which each country has erected at its frontiers to protect its shrunken and exhausted home market. The crisis has finally buried the system of free trade. Each capitalist has now only one aim, that of selling at the highest possible price to the toilers of his own country, who are impoverished by the crisis, and to guarantee himself an extra margin of profit by selling on foreign markets at the lowest possible price so as to defeat the competition of his rivals.

The plans for the organisation of so-called autarky of production are only a deceptive mask for the increased economic aggressiveness of the bourgeoisie in each country. Dumping is becoming the rule for all the big capitalist countries. This makes for a breach of all the existing commercial treaties, and the struggle for the conclusion of new treaties develops in an atmosphere of tension and of actual economic war. To avoid bankruptcy, the small countries are compelled to submit to the conditions imposed on them by the stronger countries. The biggest capitalist states, Great Britain and the United States, were the first to resort to the devaluation of their currencies as a means of strengthening their position on the world market and beating their opponents. Currency chaos, only to be compared with that of the worst years immediately following the war, deprives international economic relations of all stability, changes the traditional appearance of the markets, artificially creates new trends of commerce, destroys the most firmly established positions, brings about the most unexpected changes and reactions. Thus, a state of actual economic war, the preface and preparation for a war fought with armed forces, is being created throughout the world.

Allow me to dwell for a moment on the concrete example of the economic development of Japan, which is the most striking in this sphere. The rate at which Japan has achieved its commercial expansion during recent years has no precedent in the history of the commerce of capitalist countries. In the western part of the Pacific Ocean, Japan has particularly strengthened its economic positions. Japanese exports to these countries, which amounted to 367,000,000 yen in 1931, rose to 684,000,000 in 1933. During the same period, the exports of the U.S.A. to the same markets fell from 341,000,000 dollars to 262,000,000 dollars, and those of Great Britain from £30,000,000 to £24,000,000. In the Dutch Indies, Japanese trade has defeated all competitors and has occupied the first place. The textile market in Indonesia was captured by the Japanese in record time. Japanese goods have rapidly penetrated into the markets of the Near East, driving out Great Britain, Italy and the other countries. In China, Japanese imports, which fell as a result of the boycott by the people during the period of the revolutionary upsurge, have in the recent past begun to develop rapidly again owing to the support of the Nanking Government. The increase of Japanese exports to Central and South America is particularly striking.

The part played by the colonial and dependent countries in Japanese exports is larger than in the exports of any other country. Moreover, what is particularly important is that the proportion of exports taken by colonies belonging to other countries is greater in the case of Japan than for any other imperialist country. Thus, Japan has driven Great Britain from the position which she has so long occupied of being the biggest textile exporter in the whole world.

By the penetration of its trade into the colonies and spheres of influence of other countries, Japan provokes the accentuation of the contradictions with all the other imperialist countries. The bourgeoisie of these countries have resorted to special measures to defend their markets and the markets of their colonies from Japanese goods. The Japanese bourgeoisie replies to these measures by increasing its dumping and contraband. In this way the transition to an open economic war is taking place.

This tremendous economic expansion of Japan appears before us in its true light only if we realise the class nature of Japanese dumping, which is based on the miserable wages of the working men and women of Japan and on the unprecedented impoverishment of the mass of the Japanese peasantry. Japanese imperialist aggressiveness and the policy of war provocation pursued by the

Japanese military clique objectively have their roots in a class policy based on the misery and starvation of the widest masses of the people in the country.

The drastic changes in the economic relations between the dominant imperialist countries under the blows of the crisis have, therefore, been the immediate cause of the undermining and destruction of the post-war treaties. Under the pressure of British imperialism, which at a definite period was interested in the economic and political rise of Germany, France has become "convinced" of the necessity of refraining from the use of force to extort the billions of reparation payments from the German people. Nevertheless, in 1931, at the height of the crisis, the former allies still considered it possible to demand from Germany the payment of the huge sum of 2,500,000,000 marks per year for a period of 62 years. It was the intervention of the United States, compelled thereto by the crisis, that resulted in the complete collapse of this part of the Versailles Treaty.

When the fascists came to power in Germany at the beginning of 1933, three-quarters of the Versailles system had already been reduced to nothing. The so-called unilateral acts which have resulted in its further liquidation, were equally the result of a concealed but desperate struggle between the big imperialist Powers. These acts include the refusal of the Hitler Government to fulfil the obligations arising under the Young Plan, the re-establishment of compulsory military service for the entire German people and the creation of a new and powerful German army and a naval and air fleet.

At the present time, all that is left of the Versailles system is the post-war European frontiers and the partition of the colonies and the colonial mandates. That is to say, nothing remains except that which can only be destroyed by open armed force, by means of violence and war. On the other hand, nothing at all is left of the Washington Treaty. The sections of this treaty, which fixed the relation of forces between the big naval Powers, have been denounced and have given place to a mad race in naval armaments. The armies of the Japanese imperialists which occupied Manchuria and North China without regard to protests from Geneva and from the pacifists, and which are now continuing their march towards the occupation of all Chinese territory, have crushed under foot the last traces of the Washington agreements.

Comrades, the Communist International and the Communist Parties of the various countries concerned have been in the forefront of the fight against the predatory post-war treaties. We

have no tears to shed over the end of the hateful system of oppression and plunder which was established at Versailles. On May 13, 1919, in a manifesto to the toilers of the whole world, the Executive Committee of the Communist International, which had just been formed, denounced the Versailles peace as a predatory peace. We formulated this unreserved condemnation at a moment when the leaders of international Social Democracy were affixing their signature to the Versailles Treaty and were praising it as a work of justice, as the beginning of a new era of international collaboration and "the organisation of world peace."

We do not have to withdraw a single word of our condemnation of the Versailles Treaty. But at the present moment, when the collapse and end of the Versailles Treaty is one of the chief elements characterising the present situation, it is our duty to face squarely the *new situation* confronting the proletariat of the entire world and to determine our tasks and the tasks of the proletariat in the light of this new situation. This is still not understood by everyone, especially by certain groups of pacifists for whom the struggle against the Versailles Treaty becomes at times a pretext for closing their eyes to the aggressive policy and war provocation of German National-Socialism and for deflecting the attention of the toilers from the necessity of concentrating their efforts on the struggle against the chief instigators of a new imperialist war.

We Communists were the only ones who have consistently waged a struggle for the liquidation of the Versailles Treaty. But we always carried on this struggle as a struggle for the social and national demands of the masses and for revolution.

"Our struggle against the Versailles system," declared Comrade Thälmann at the historic meeting in Paris on October 31, 1932, "has nothing in common with the imperialist demands and nationalist propaganda of the German bourgeoisie and the National Socialists. . . . We want to destroy both the national oppression established by the Versailles Treaty and the social oppression of the toilers caused by the system of capitalist profit. . . . Our fight against the Versailles Treaty is a fight for wages and bread, a fight for liberty, a fight for Socialism."

Comrades, we fought for the destruction of the post-war treaties along the path of social and national emancipation. That which has taken place has nothing in common with the aims for which we struggled. The post-war treaties were smashed to pieces by the desperate rivalries between the imperialists. The situation which has resulted from this is the eve of a new world war which German imperialism intends to wage in order to impose upon the peoples a "piece" after the fashion of the one demonstrated by

the Prussian generals at Brest-Litovsk. It is this menace, which is to-day the most serious, that we take as our starting point in deciding our position in the struggle against imperialism and war.

The end of the Versailles and Washington systems signifies the bankruptcy of hypocritical bourgeois pacifism, it signifies that the instability in international relations has attained an extreme degree, it denotes the transition to the use of force for solving all acute questions, all existing conflicts in all parts of the world, it marks a turning point in the headlong armaments race. A new imperialist war for the revision of the world is not only inevitable, is not only being prepared for in all its details by every imperialist Power, but can break out and surprise us at any moment.

II. THE STRENGTH OF THE SOVIET UNION, THE JAPANESE PLANS OF AGGRESSION AND THE DRIVE OF FASCISM

Comrades, the capitalist world is hurling itself into a new war. We set ourselves the task to determine concretely whence the war danger comes to-day, who are the present instigators of war, what kind of war it is that they want to kindle and are already preparing. To answer these questions we must concentrate our attention on three fundamental facts, as follows:—

- (1) The powerful rise of the Soviet Union.
- (2) The attack of the Japanese military clique in the Far East.
- (3) The drive of fascism in Europe, and especially in Germany.

The Powerful Rise of the Soviet Union

The development of the forces of revolution has always been one of the factors with the greatest influence on international interrelations. But the present rise of the Soviet Union is a fact of a new order, and its historic importance is far in excess of anything known in the whole of previous history. It is a fact which is already breaking the framework of the old capitalist world, which overthrows all existing interrelations, and determines a new line of development of the whole international situation.

The Soviet Union, which has become stronger from all points of view, both internally and in its international relations, is the only constant, stable and solid force which can serve as the support for a policy of defending peace. Such a consolidation of the international position of the Soviet Union is the direct result of the strengthening of the position of the dictatorship of the proletariat and Socialism in all spheres of the life of the country.

In 1918-20, the armies of intervention sent against the Land of

the Soviets by the Entente Powers had on their side the forces of the Russian capitalists and landowners whom the October Revolution had driven from power. In some cases, the imperialist forces of the interventionists restricted themselves merely to enrolling and arming cadres and directing the attacks made on the young Soviet Republic by the reactionary classes which were not yet completely defeated. In 1930-32, the trial of the Industrial Party revealed that the imperialist Powers, in organising intervention against the Soviet Union, were relying on the support of a counter-revolutionary organisation which embraced all the elements hostile to the dictatorship of the proletariat within the country.

The changes in the relation of forces which have taken place in the Soviet Union of recent years, and which are an expression of the final and irrevocable victory of socialism over capitalism, gave a final death blow to these criminal plans of attack against the Soviet Union. They have destroyed any possibility for the counter-revolutionary armies of intervention to count on receiving support within the U.S.S.R. from the classes hostile to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But this increased class homogeneity in the population of the Soviet Union is not the only element which we must take into consideration. The point is not merely the fact that, as against the capitalist countries, the proletarians and collective farmers of the Soviet Union constitute a compact mass of constructors of the new socialist society, determined to defend the victories of the revolution by all their means and at the cost of their lives. The technical equipment of the Soviet country, which is the result of the victorious completion of the First Five-Year Plan and the fulfilment of the first half of the Second Five-Year Plan, allows them to regard the prospect of an attack by the imperialist countries with full confidence in their own forces. It is sufficient to recall a few figures bearing on the development of heavy industry in the Soviet Union.

The share of the former tsarist empire in world production of pig-iron in 1913 was only 5.3 per cent. The share of the Soviet Union in 1928 was only 3.7 per cent., while at the end of 1934 it was already 16.7 per cent. (*Applause.*) At the end of 1934, the Soviet Union took second place in the production of pig-iron, coming after the United States but before Great Britain and Germany. (*Applause.*) As for steel, the corresponding figures are 3.5 per cent. in 1913, 3.9 per cent. in 1928, and 11.7 per cent. in 1934. (*Applause.*)

Nothing can serve better than these figures to emphasise the tremendous historic importance of the policy of the C.P.S.U., which, under the leadership of Comrade Stalin, has ensured the victorious completion of the Five-Year Plan and has thus created the basis for a radical alteration in the relation of forces between the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries. In the sphere of military strength and the defensive capacity of the Soviet Union, this means that the country of the dictatorship of the proletariat has already an armed force and a capacity for defence which are in no way inferior to those of any capitalist country. The workers' and peasants' armies, which in the heroic years of the civil war were still only armies in the process of construction, and were overcoming the difficulties of the transition period from detachments of Red Guards, full of enthusiasm but only slightly disciplined and badly equipped, into a regular, centralised and disciplined army equipped according to the most modern technique, have been transformed into the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, which has been completely reconstructed on the basis of the most modern technique and the industrial progress of the country.

"The Red Army has been transformed from a backward army into modern, up-to-date army. It has in industry a basis of production which can manufacture all modern implements of war." (Voroshilov, "Lenin, Stalin and the Red Army.")

In the Far East, where the direct menace of an imperialist attack is greater, the frontiers of the Soviet Union have ceased to be defenceless frontiers. They are defended by an army which has at its disposal its own military economic base and its own highly developed war industry. (*Applause.*)

This amazing rise of the economic and military power of the Soviet Union is accompanied by the continual growth of the sympathy for and devotion to the workers' state exhibited by the proletariat and the wide masses of the people throughout the capitalist world.

The tremendous authority enjoyed by the Soviet Union not only among the Communist vanguard, but also among the Social Democratic and non-Party workers, among the small peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, the intellectuals and the youth, the fact that millions of people are ready to fight for the defence of the Soviet Union with all their strength, are among the very important factors responsible for the fact that the country of the dictatorship of the proletariat has so strong a position as against the capitalist states.

Taking all these elements into consideration, the conclusion that we must reach is that the relations between the Soviet Union and the capitalist states have entered a new phase, the basic feature of which is the growing authority of the country of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its peace policy.

We find repercussions of this new fact in all fields of international policy, and we must most carefully take it into account in determining our policy.

The Aggression of Japanese Imperialism in the Far East

Let us now see what is happening in the capitalist world.

The imperialist power that is the most aggressive, that is feverishly preparing for war, and is already waging war, is without doubt Japan. Since 1931 bellicose Japanese imperialism has set about changing the map of the world by armed force. After the military seizure of Manchuria, Japanese imperialism proceeded to occupy Northern China; it openly showed its intention of establishing its protectorate over all China, and is now preparing to continue its further advance towards the centre of China, aided by its Kuomintang agents, who betrayed the Chinese people and its struggle for independence and national liberation.

The aim pursued by imperialist Japan and openly avowed by its statesmen, is the establishment of Japanese hegemony not merely in the Far East, but in all Eastern Asia and along the western shores of the Pacific Ocean. To attain this goal, Japan requires, first of all, to create a raw material base for its heavy industry.

The Japanese militarists required the conquest of Manchuria and of Northern China so as to have a base for attacking the Soviet frontiers and to create a specious hinterland for the armies which will conduct this attack. It is well known that the relation of forces in the Far East at the present time is such that war against the Soviet Union presents itself to Japan as a very difficult matter whose issue is far from being considered as certain, even by a section of the Japanese generals themselves. But on the other hand, consideration of the growing strength of the Soviet Union and of the Red Army drives the most aggressive Japanese militarists to come out against any postponement of the war and in favour of using all opportunities as rapidly as possible and finding allies that could enable them to begin the war to-day instead of putting it off until to-morrow.

Here is what we read in the pamphlet on the so-called "Defence of the State," published by the Press Bureau of the Japanese General Staff in October, 1934:

"All this [i.e., considerations of the growing military strength of the Soviet Union] obliges us to reflect on the nature of the intentions of the U.S.S.R. If the Japanese Empire does not complete its armaments as a counterpoise to the powerful Red Army, and if in particular it does not strengthen the power of its air forces, it will be very difficult to do so to-morrow.

"And it is superfluous to stress the necessity of increasing the forces now in Manchukuo."

This tendency to accentuate the situation in the Far East dominates the whole of Japanese policy; it was manifested by the refusal to conclude a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, by the intrigues through which Japanese diplomacy links itself with the instigators of war and the enemies of the Soviet Union in Europe, by the increased war preparations now being carried out by the Japanese generals in Manchuria, by the feverish construction in the latter region of new railway lines and strategic roads, by efforts to create an autonomous industrial base on the Asiatic continent, in Manchuria, for the Japanese army, by the continued provocations on the Soviet frontiers on the part of aggressive Japanese-Manchurian circles and their repeated efforts to provoke an armed conflict with the Mongolian People's Republic.

This aggressive policy of Japan is the result of the entire domestic and foreign situation of Japanese imperialism. It must not be forgotten, comrades, that modern Japan is the country of the deepest and sharpest class differentiation. It is a country in which the semi-feudal oppression of the masses of starving peasants is coupled with the most hideous capitalist exploitation. Preparation for war is reflected in the whole life of the country. While inflation and war orders are producing an increase in production and in the profits of the armament manufacturers, real wages are falling. They have dropped by 20 per cent. as a result of inflation alone, and by 66 per cent. for agricultural workers. The working hours are as high as 14-18 a day. In the countryside there are not less than two million starving families, which means 8-10 million persons. Need one be astonished if the aggressive circles of the Japanese bourgeoisie regard as a challenge the very fact of the existence of the country of Socialism, the uninterrupted growth of well-being for the masses and the freedom of the peoples in the U.S.S.R.?

The existence of the Chinese Soviet Republic and its revolutionary victories still further increase the aggressiveness of the Japanese brigands. The Soviet regime established in a territory

inhabited by 100 million people and possessing an army of a million men: here is a new gigantic breach in the capitalist world, here is a gigantic barrier to the realisation of the plans of pillage of the Japanese brigands. The Japanese imperialists and generals, who consider themselves the vanguard of the whole capitalist world in organising and provoking war against the Soviet Union, look on Soviet China as a mortal enemy that they want to annihilate at all costs.

The policy of expansion pursued by the Japanese generals is the most reactionary class policy. Their bayonets are directed primarily and above all against the revolution, but the forces of the revolution will unite and fight with the utmost vigour and enthusiasm to foil their criminal plans. Comrades, if the war which day by day for the past four years has threatened the Far Eastern frontiers of the Soviet Union has still not broken out, we owe it exclusively to the far-sighted and courageous peace policy pursued by the Soviet Union. (Applause.) We greet this policy. And it will be legitimate for us at the same time to send hearty greetings from the platform of this Congress to the glorious Red Army standing on guard at the Far Eastern frontiers of our Socialist Fatherland. (Stormy and prolonged applause. The delegates rise.)

Comrades of the Far Eastern Red Army, if the Japanese bandit starts an attack and you rise in overwhelming strength to repel it and to make every imperialist bandit lose for ever the inclination to make such attacks, be sure that throughout the world, under the leadership of our Communist Parties, millions of toilers will support your fight with all their strength, to aid you to break the backbone of our class enemy. The Workers' and Peasants' Red Army in alliance with the international proletariat constitute a power which no one will ever be able to conquer. (Applause.)

The Drive of Fascism, the Principal Instigator of War

Comrades, the victory of fascism in Germany and in a number of other countries in Europe and the general offensive of the fascist movement is the third new fact contributing to determine the international situation to which I wish to draw your attention.

The drive of fascism is a reactionary response of decaying capitalism to the triumph of Socialism in the country of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It proceeds side by side with an extreme sharpening of the class struggle, and hence also with an extreme intensification of the danger of war. Comrade Stalin has

repeatedly drawn our attention to the fact that the fascist dictatorship is one of the forms of organisation of the hinterland of the bourgeoisie for the new war. The fascist dictatorship is directly linked up with the preparations for war, and it gives the preparations for the new imperialist war a particular stamp and direction. The drive of fascism is the most clearly expressed form of the capitalist world's sliding into a new world war. The victory of German National-Socialism, which is the most aggressive variety of fascism, is not merely the victory of a party based upon the most unbridled chauvinism and setting the unleashing of war as its immediate goal. It is likewise the victory of a party which proclaims without any reticence that its immediate aim is to undertake a counter-revolutionary war against the Soviet Union, the revolutionary movement of the working class and the movement for the national liberation of the oppressed peoples throughout the world.

German fascism masks its war provocation by the demand for the liberation and unification of all Germans living in Europe. In reality, the task it sets itself is that of establishing its own hegemony on the European continent, and counts on attaining this aim by leading a crusade of reaction against the Soviet Union. The aims of the foreign policy of the "Third Empire of Fascism" have been expressed so clearly and unambiguously that there can be no doubt about them.

"We National-Socialists," writes Hitler, "thereby consciously put an end to the pre-war trend of foreign policy. We join on to where the end came six hundred years ago. We stop the everlasting procession of Germans to South and West Europe and direct our gaze to the country in the East. We finally put an end to the colonial and trade policy of the pre-war period and go over to the land policy of the future."

"But when to-day we speak of new land in Europe we can have in mind only Russia and the bordering states subject to it."

"Fate itself indicates this path to us."

This fundamental direction of the foreign policy of National-Socialism is confirmed by all the activity of the leaders of the "Third Empire," by everything they have done since their advent to power. The stubborn refusal to sign a pact guaranteeing peace and the frontiers in Eastern Europe is not the least important manifestation of this activity. On May 21, this year, in his last speech on German foreign policy, in a speech which is

the height of hypocrisy and demagogy, Hitler once again confirmed that the entire policy of National-Socialism is aimed at an attack against the Soviet Union. This time he gives a justification much more persuasive than the appeal to the conquering expeditions of the mediæval Teutonic Knights.

"Our moral conceptions," he said, "are diametrically opposed to those of Soviet Russia. . . . It is Germany that saved Europe from Communism. . . . National Socialism cannot call upon its German fellow countrymen, the adherents of National Socialism, to support a system which we consider our most mortal enemy."

Indeed, no contrast is as profound as that existing between the country of the dictatorship of Hitler fascism and the country of the dictatorship of the proletariat. German fascism is the instigator of the most raging capitalist reaction, of bloody oppression of the workers, the toiling peasants, the national minorities and the entire German people. The Soviet power means the liberty of the working class, the liberation of all toilers from all forms of oppression and exploitation, the right of self-determination for all peoples. The Soviet power is the champion of the liberation of all humanity. Fascist Germany is the reign of the magnates of capital and of the feudal landowners. The Soviet Union is the country of emancipated labour, of conscious discipline, of the most advanced culture and progress. German fascism, which is the instigator of the civil war of the dying bourgeoisie against the proletariat, is likewise the champion of war against the country of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The basis of the war propaganda carried on by the fascist press in calling for the "extirpation of Bolshevism" is along with rabid imperialist aggression, rabid class hatred of the most reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

The fact that, in a country with a population numerically exceeding that of any other country in capitalist Europe, a party is in power which so sharply puts the problem of a war aiming at the destruction of the country of the victorious proletarian revolution—this fact must to-day occupy the centre of our attention and our work. If it is true that one of the fundamental qualities of Bolshevism, that one of the fundamental features of our revolutionary strategy, is the ability to determine at each moment who is the principal enemy and to be able to concentrate all forces for struggle against that enemy—then it is in the present juncture, and in relation to the present position, that we must

particularly give proof of this ability. To concentrate our battle fire against German fascism, as the principal instigator of war and the mortal enemy of the Soviet Union and the proletarian revolution, is the duty of every revolutionary. (*Applause.*) Whoever fails to understand this duty fails to understand anything of the forms in which the fight between reaction and revolution is developing in Europe to-day.

Every concession made to the aggressive policy of fascism facilitates the work of the enemies of peace and is a step forward in the matter of the unleashing of war.

The fascists will not succeed in imposing on us by the pacifist chatter with which they mask their policy of war. We shall not allow ourselves to be deceived by the hypocritical agitation carried on by the fascist leaders with regard to the national demands of the German population in the various countries of Europe. We have always understood and supported these national demands, we understand them and support them to-day as well. We are not supporters of the encirclement of Germany, or of the oppression and violent separation of the mass of German-speaking populations. We are for the complete liberation, social and national, of the German people. We are for the liberty of all the German-speaking peoples, for their right to national unity. But the liberation of the German people will commence, and must inevitably commence, with the overthrow of the fascist regime. The National-Socialist Party, which has subjected the workers and the peasants of Germany to a barbarous regime of concentration camps, prisons and tortures, cannot be a champion of the national liberation of the German speaking peoples.

The national aspirations of the German-speaking populations in the various countries of Europe are for the fascist leaders nothing but small change, which they cynically put into circulation in order to secure support for their plans of conquest and counter-revolutionary war. Has not Hitler himself given proof of this by sacrificing the interests of the German population of Southern Tyrol?

German fascism is attempting to create reactionary blocs, subordinate to its plans of conquest, by supporting the most reactionary parties and fascist cliques in various countries.

The first concrete act of this policy was the conclusion at the beginning of 1934 of the pact between German National-Socialism and Polish fascism. This pact is essentially different from the majority we have known since the war. It is a secret pact; and this return to the methods of secret diplomacy is also

one of the worthy deeds of National-Socialism. What will be said of this return by the Labour Party leaders, who have cherished the illusion that the end of secret diplomacy means the end of wars and who to-day in fact indirectly facilitate the fascists' policy in Europe?

All that is known of the pact between Poland and Germany goes to show that it is an aggressive pact serving the preparations for war. There is not the slightest reference in it to its lack of validity in the case of the signatories themselves being the aggressor. It endeavours to establish a certain co-ordination between Polish and German propaganda and between the action of these two countries among the bands of the Ukrainian counter-revolutionary emigrés and the counter-revolutionary Ukrainian bourgeoisie. All this means that by the signature of this pact Polish fascism has joined the plan of Germany's territorial expansion towards the East, the criminal plan for the invasion and colonisation of the Soviet Ukraine.

I will not dwell on the fact that the agreement between Poland and Germany is full of contradictions, as has been very strikingly demonstrated recently in connection with the Danzig question. In concluding this pact with the cliques which govern Poland, German National-Socialism has in no way renounced its anti-Polish claims, but has merely desired to recruit assistants for its criminal anti-Soviet adventure. The plan, which consists of diverting the menace of National-Socialist expansion from Poland by directing the menace against the Soviet Union, is a plan worthy of the reactionary adventurers who are ready to hazard even the independence of the Polish people. It is obvious that if German fascism were to succeed in consolidating itself in Europe with the aid of Polish fascism and in realising even a part of its aims of territorial conquest, the fate of the Polish people would by no means be an enviable one. A minimum of discernment suffices to foresee that the present masters of Germany can only once more put in question the national independence of the Polish people and subject it once more to the threat of partition by violence. And that is what Polish public opinion is more and more coming to realise.

The pact with Poland has served German National-Socialism as a starting point from which to enlarge the network of its intrigues. Its direct consequence has been to aggravate the menace to the frontiers of Czechoslovakia and to the independence of Czechoslovakia, and to make German fascism more aggressive in its struggle to put an end to the independence of the

Baltic countries. It has had as its consequence the extreme aggravation of the Austrian problem. Having destroyed the Franco-Polish alliance, National-Socialism is aiming at the disintegration of the Little Entente and its replacement in Central Europe by a new *bloc* of fascist powers, the axis of which is to consist of Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria. In promising Yugoslavia a part of the Austrian territories, the German fascists are endeavouring to draw this country also into the *bloc*, just as they are trying to change the orientation of the foreign policy of Rumania.

The open and shameless assistance which Hitler fascism is giving to the development of the fascist movement in all countries is a component part of this reactionary plan. By using foreign connections in its bellicose drive, German fascism is mobilising and agitating all the war parties throughout Europe—from England to the Balkans, from Finland to Spain, from Holland to Italy.

Thus we see ever more clearly defined in Europe a group of capitalist states, dominated and directed by the most bellicose and reactionary forces, who are directly interested in an immediate outbreak of war in general and, in particular, of a war directed against the Soviet Union. On the other hand, a group is appearing, consisting of capitalist countries which for the most part have preserved a parliamentary regime and which are more or less interested in the preservation of peace.

There are certain prophets of reaction who have the effrontery to assert that the victory of the reactionary and fascist parties in all countries would facilitate the cause of peace, because these parties, being closest to each other in their ideology, would be able more easily to come to an understanding.

But look at what is going on between fascist Germany and fascist Italy. Germany's raising of the question of the annexation of Austria as the most acute question in Central Europe, the development of a National-Socialist movement and the repeated attempts at a fascist *putsch* in Austria, have created a direct menace to the frontiers of Italian imperialism. The renewal of the "*Drang nach Osten*" of German imperialism in fascist garb cuts across the lines of imperialist expansion of Italian fascism.

There is thus created a focus of conflicts which undermines all stability of relations and tranquillity in Central Europe. To assert that it is possible to base the peace of Europe and of the whole world on an entente between fascist dictatorships which have completely reduced the toilers to slavery, is to lie in a most shameless fashion.

In the period immediately following the war it was customary to say that there were in Europe certain particularly dangerous war centres, so-called "Balkanised" regions, where the spark of a war conflagration might arise more easily than elsewhere. Today there is no longer any part of Europe which has not been "Balkanised" in this sense, there is not a corner of the Continent—in the part of it which is still under the capitalist regime—where the states are not ranged against each other, ready to pass in a few hours from the present state of unstable peace, a peace armed to the teeth and very uncertain, to a state of open war.

This is the direct consequence of the drive, the victories and the intrigues of fascism, particularly of German National-Socialism. Each step forward made by fascism and the war parties of the bourgeoisie can only hasten the moment of the plunge of the capitalist world into the abyss of war.

This is one more argument, comrades, and by no means a secondary one, for those who ask us why we put the defence of bourgeois-democratic liberties at the centre of our united front and people's front policy. We cannot remain indifferent when witnessing the creation of a state system directed by the most bellicose and chauvinist groups of the bourgeoisie, in the presence of the growth of the extremist war parties throughout the world, and the tendency towards the formation of a *bloc* of fascist countries for a war against the Soviet Union. In this connection, our task does not consist merely in passively registering events, but in making politics, that is to say, intervening in these events so as to change their course or, at least, to hold back the outbreak of war.

Can one not foresee what a victorious war of German fascism would signify for Europe? Such a war would signify the end of national independence for the Czechs, the Lithuanians and the other little nationalities of the Baltic, as well as for the Poles, Dutch and Belgians. All the peoples of Europe understand this, a proof of which is the enthusiasm with which these peoples whose national independence is threatened by National-Socialism welcome the ever more active and authoritative participation of the Soviet Union in European politics, because this international activity of the U.S.S.R. bars the road to the offensive of the German fascists.

In concentrating the fire of our struggle against the principal enemy of peace, against German fascism—which does not prevent us waging an irreconcilable struggle against the imperialism of

our "own" countries and against the extreme war parties of the capitalist countries connected with German fascism—we accomplish our role as the supreme defenders of all the liberties and conquests of the working class and toilers, and we defend national freedom.

III. THE POSITION OF THE BIG IMPERIALIST POWERS

What is the policy of the big imperialist powers in the face of the growth of bellicose German fascism and Japanese militarism?

It is essential to bear in mind that war against the Soviet Union is not the sole aim of German National-Socialism and Japanese militarism. They are fighting for their own hegemony. Their attack upon the Soviet Union is only a component part of a general plan of expansion and conquest. These plans, which aim at a new repartition of the world, clash with the whole complex of existing interests and still further intensify the antagonisms between the imperialists, not only in Europe but throughout the world.

Japan's annexation of Manchuria and its aggressive activity aimed at the conquest of the whole of China intensify imperialist rivalries throughout the Pacific Ocean. Both England and the United States are directly affected by this expedition of Japan against China. The antagonisms between Great Britain and the United States are the most profound of all those that tear apart the imperialist world, because they manifest themselves on a world scale, because these two countries encounter one another in every part of the world, and because the goal towards which American imperialism inevitably strives is the undermining of British colonial and maritime supremacy. But the military power of the United States and its strategic position in the Pacific Ocean do not yet correspond to its strength and its economic development, in spite of the tremendous growth of its armaments during the past few years.

Thus we are confronted here by an imperialist state which does not set itself *immediate* goals of conquest, I emphasise—*immediate goals of conquest*, and which is interested in gaining time, in postponing an armed conflict as long as possible, and in employing the time thus gained to strengthen its own positions. We witness a number of measures undertaken by the United States for gradually strengthening its position in the Pacific Ocean. These measures are seen in the reinforcement of the already formidable military-naval bases and in the establishment of new bases, both naval and air, in the Western Pacific, the Aleutian

Islands, Alaska, etc. All these measures are a response to those of Japan, which endeavours to win positions that would open a path for it towards Southern Asia and the Indian Ocean. The armament race and the struggle for the strategic preparation for war are in full swing in the Far East and the whole Pacific Ocean.

The position adopted by Great Britain is very different from that of the United States. British policy cannot be understood if one confines oneself to emphasising the contrast between the countries that were late in entering the imperialist struggle of competition and the countries that succeeded in conquering colonial possessions, drawing the hasty conclusion that the former are for war and the latter for peace. The matter is not so simple. Britain, which undoubtedly possesses the greatest colonial empire, does not pursue a policy of peace at all.

In the first place, the defence of an empire extending to every continent requires Britain to react to conflicts that break out or are maturing even at the most remote points, and in the most different regions. Its policy is full of contradictions, and these contradictions in their turn become the source of the instability of its position, the cause of new conflicts.

In the second place, the British bourgeoisie is the champion in regard to suppressing the liberation movements of the colonial peoples, just as the German fascists are the champions in establishing the open dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the working class.

As early as 1848 Karl Marx thus defined the role of Britain with regard to the development of the revolution in Europe:

"As in the epoch of Napoleon, England will stand at the head

of the counter-revolutionary armies, but through the war itself it will be thrown to the head of the revolutionary movement, and will pay its debt towards the revolution of the 18th century." (Karl Marx, article in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, January 1, 1849.)

The requirements of struggle for preservation of its colonial hegemony, against revolution and against the national-liberation movements remain to-day, too, the fundamental mainspring of British policy. These requirements are especially put forward by the most reactionary groups of the bourgeoisie. The attitude of British imperialism towards German National-Socialism cannot be otherwise explained. In the recent period Great Britain has repeatedly given its support to National-Socialism against the forces that endeavoured and are endeavouring to oppose the

latter's war policy. It is under the open or concealed support of Britain, and even urged on by the latter, that National-Socialism has rebuilt an imperialist German mass army. Britain has legitimised the armaments of imperialist Germany by concluding with Germany the recent naval agreement, which has sanctioned the annulment of the war clauses of the Versailles Treaty, has given the signal for a new race in the building of war fleets in Europe and at the same time has created a new instrument of aggression in the Baltic, at the gates of the Soviet Union.

If we remember that the war of 1914-18 largely arose from the conflict between British imperialism and German imperialism, and that the expansion of National-Socialism takes place in all directions, that it is demanding for itself a new colonial empire and hegemony in Europe, then it is clear that the problem will again present itself just as in 1914-18, but this time in a much sharper fashion. It is easy to understand that the support given to German fascism by die-hard circles of the British bourgeoisie is nothing else than support—direct or indirect—given to the preparation for war against the Soviet Union. British imperialism, and in particular the most reactionary section of the British bourgeoisie (here also the question must be put in a differentiated fashion), considers it to be its "historical" task to deal a mortal blow to the country of Socialism, or at least to weaken the Soviet Union for a long period of time by a series of wars in Europe and in the Far East. Finally, the attitude of Poland, in which British imperialism undoubtedly plays an outstanding role, confirms this statement.

We have here a classic example of the permanent tendency of the imperialist countries to solve their contradictions by organising intervention against the U.S.S.R. The reactionary British bourgeoisie thinks it can direct the drive of German and Japanese imperialism that menaces its own positions into an anti-Soviet channel. But in fact the international situation is so complicated to-day, the different war centres are so closely bound up with one another that any project of "localising" an imperialist war, or of limiting the war plans of German fascism and Japanese imperialism, is a sheer utopia. The British bourgeoisie, by the concessions and support which it gives to the instigators of war in Europe and the Far East, accelerates the onset of a new world war into which the British Empire will inevitably be drawn.

A different role is now played by France. The French bourgeoisie is still intelligent enough not to forget that in the gospel of Hitlerism France is depicted as the traditional enemy of

German imperialism in Europe. It is still intelligent enough to understand that every step taken by German National-Socialism along the road toward the conquest of hegemony in Europe must inevitably place the security of France and the very integrity of French territory in jeopardy. That is why the French bourgeoisie is particularly conscious of the indivisibility of peace at the present time and is interested in the defence of the *status quo*, which can only mean defence of peace and opposition to German fascism's unbounded plans of aggression.

Obviously, no one can cherish excessive illusions regarding the consistency of the French bourgeoisie in this peace policy. The position of French imperialism also is full of contradictions which manifest themselves both within the country as well as internationally. For a long time, a considerable section of the French bourgeoisie have cherished plans for agreement with German imperialism. These are the plans of the most reactionary section of the bourgeoisie, Tardieu, the *Fiery Cross*, the church and the reactionary elements that are attempting to fascise the army. In making this statement we must at the same time emphasise the fact that the present policy of the French bourgeoisie is nothing but the expression of class relations within the country, in particular of the pressure of the mass of the French people, who do not want to permit anti-Soviet agreements with Hitler, because they hate the Hitler regime and place their hope in the country of the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is why the united front and people's front policy of our French Communist Party is a guarantee for peace, not only for France, but for the workers of the whole world. (*Applause.*)

Let us draw a few conclusions from this cursory analysis of the mutual relations of the big imperialist powers:

1. The contrast between the capitalist world and the world of Socialism continues to be the deepest contradiction of the present historical period.

2. This contradiction is expressed to-day especially sharply by the fact that the imperialists of two of the greatest countries, Germany and Japan, are openly calling for war against the Soviet Union, are trying to create a *bloc* of a number of reactionary and fascist states to prepare and wage this war, and are supported and encouraged in these efforts by the most reactionary strata of the bourgeoisie of the greatest imperialist power, Great Britain.

3. The policy of aggression of German fascism and Japanese militarism leads inevitably to a new accentuation of all international antagonisms, but at the same time to a differentiation in

the policy of the great imperialist powers, some of which are interested in the defence of the *status quo* and in a temporary and conditional defence of peace.

It follows from all this, comrades, that the international situation is particularly tense and acute, that war can break out at any moment and at any place, and that any war will inevitably become a world war. It likewise follows from all this that the antagonisms between the big imperialist powers are developing in such a way that at a given moment, under given conditions, they may to a certain extent form an obstacle to the creation of a new *bloc* of the powers for war against the Soviet Union. This opens wide possibilities for the Soviet policy of peace.

If it is true that differences exist in the positions of the various countries—such as I have just sketched—then we cannot fail to take them into account in determining our revolutionary strategy and our tactics in the fight against war. This is absolutely essential.

Let me remind you of the exceptional clarity which Lenin gave to the theoretical basis for the necessity of this revolutionary strategy:

"It is possible to conquer the more powerful enemy only by exerting our efforts to the utmost and by *necessarily*, thoroughly, carefully, attentively and skilfully taking advantage of every "fissure," however small, in the ranks of our enemies, of every antagonism of interests among the bourgeoisie of the various countries; among the various groups or types of bourgeois in the various countries; by taking advantage of every opportunity, however small, of gaining an ally among the masses, even though this ally be temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who do not understand this, do not understand even a grain of Marxism and of scientific modern socialism in general."¹

As you see, Lenin directly says that it is obligatory to utilise all the contradictions of interests, not only between the different groups of the bourgeoisie in a single country, but also the contradictions of interests between the bourgeoisie of *different countries*. Lenin speaks here precisely of the attitude of the proletariat to the problems of international policy and war. The directive he gives is obligatory for us above all in determining the foreign policy of the state and of the dictatorship of the prolet-

¹ Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, p. 68.

tariat. But it is at the same time obligatory for the proletariat and for the Communist Parties of the capitalist countries, in so far as these Parties can and must adopt a positive position in deciding problems of international policy, intervening actively in the course of events and aiding tendencies that retard the unleashing of war and hindering everything that constitutes a direct immediate menace to peace.

At the base of our revolutionary strategy and consequently of our concrete struggle against war we put the concentration of forces against the Japanese militarists who threaten an onslaught on the Soviet Union at its Eastern frontiers and who are striving to destroy the conquests of the Chinese Revolution, against German fascism—the chief instigator of war in Europe. We endeavour to utilise all differences existing in the positions of the various imperialist powers. We must utilise them skilfully in the interests of the defence of peace, not forgetting for a moment the necessity of delivering a blow against the enemy in our own countries, against our "own" imperialism. (*Applause.*)

IV. THE ATTACK OF FASCIST ITALY ON ABYSSINIA AND THE ACCENTUATION OF COLONIAL QUESTIONS

Permit me to dwell on the policy of fascist Italy and its colonial and war expansion in Eastern Africa, aimed primarily against Abyssinia. I shall restrict myself here to four observations.

First observation. By the example of Italy we clearly see that the fascist regime is inevitably drawn into war in virtue of its policy and in virtue of the contradictions of this policy.

Italian fascism cannot boast of having been consistent in its foreign policy. In 1923, immediately after coming to power, Mussolini supported imperialist France in carrying out the military occupation of the Ruhr. In the following years—up to 1934—the basic line of his policy was, on the contrary, that of struggle to undermine the hegemony of French imperialism in Europe by the organisation of a bloc of "revisionist" powers. Italian fascism during this period paraded its "traditional friendship" with England, but it intrigued against England in Asia Minor and in the Red Sea. On the shores of Arabia it fomented the war of the Arab kingdom of the Yemen against the Arab kingdom of the Hedjaz, the vassal of the British Empire.

To-day it is struggling against British imperialism over the Abyssinian question. The fascist newspapers threaten Britain with the destruction of the formidable naval base of Malta within a half-hour. There is a single basic cause for this succession of

somersaults in the foreign policy of Italian fascism, viz., the search for a solution by arms of the domestic and foreign problems and contradictions of the fascist regime. The hankering for war in order to consolidate the basis of the dictatorship by military victories haunts the leaders of the fascist regime. All the turns of international policy serve them as a pretext. It is only the military weakness of Italy in comparison with other big imperialist powers, plus the lack of chauvinism among the people, that has restrained Italian imperialism from war. The Italian people that fought heroically on the barricades in the years of civil war during the struggle for national independence, when it was conscious of fighting for its liberty and for its rights, does not intend to fight for the colonial adventures of its hated rulers. (*Applause.*)

Second observation. The conflict with Abyssinia is likewise the last stage of the evolution of the nationalist and chauvinist demagogic of fascism, the conclusion of the so-called people's campaigns with the aid of which fascism has endeavoured to deceive the masses. Fascism has launched new demagogic campaigns at each difficulty, at each aggravation of the country's situation. But a moment comes when all demagogic ceases to avail and fascism, under the whip of its own unbridled chauvinism, under the drive of the bourgeois groups that are most interested in a warlike outcome, precipitates itself into the war which it has preached as a healing remedy for the world and as an inevitable necessity for the solution of the problems facing the world. War is the last wisdom of fascist regimes.

Third observation. The bellicose campaign of Italy in Eastern Africa has had as its consequence the accentuation of its mutual relations with the big capitalist powers, not only in the area affected by the Italian attack, but in all other areas as well. In Europe, the repercussions of this campaign are already to-day extremely powerful and will become still stronger if an armed conflict breaks out. In fact, there is not a single capitalist state which is not directly or indirectly affected by this conflict. Great Britain, which is opposing Italy's war policy for alleged pacifist reasons, is guided in fact by selfish imperialist interests, seeing in the occupation of Abyssinia by Italy a first concrete act modifying the map of colonial possessions in Africa, and thus raising in practice the question of a new repartition of the world. At the moment when the demand for colonies is the subject of a huge mass campaign in Germany and is being raised even by Poland, this is a very dangerous precedent.

France would prefer to let Italy have freedom of action, for it does not want to lose the latter's support which will be necessary for it at the decisive hour. On the other hand, however, it fears that if Italy is occupied in Africa, a sharp intensification of the situation may take place at any moment in Europe, where German fascism is only waiting for an opportunity to realise its plans in Austria, in the Danube Basin and on the Italian frontier.

Even Japan, which is 12,000 kms. away from East Africa, and which does not yet have such large interests in Abyssinia as it tries to indicate, intervenes none the less in the conflict with considerable noise, seeing in it an excellent pretext for covering its own imperialist visage with a mask as protector of the coloured races.

The impossibility of erecting barriers to separate the different points of friction between the big imperialist powers, the impossibility of localising any conflict breaking out between them is plainly shown by the example of Abyssinia. *Peace is indivisible.*

The last but not the least important observation. The attack of fascist Italy on Abyssinia will inevitably result in a new sharpening of the antagonisms and open struggle between the imperialist world and the colonial peoples. For the time being the struggle of the Negro peoples of Central and Eastern Africa, which has been going on for decades, has been in abeyance. During these decades, the Negroes in Africa have been subjected to a regime not only of exploitation and enslavement but of veritable physical extermination. The crisis years accentuated the horrors of the colonial regime enforced by the Europeans on the immense black continent. On the other hand, in the war which they waged in Libya in 1924-29, the Italian fascists gave a proof how fascism conducts its colonising activity. In this sphere also fascism has proved to be the most barbarous form of the domination of the bourgeoisie.

The war of Italy in Libya was conducted from start to finish as a war of extermination of the native population. It ended in the massacre of 20,000 natives—men, women and children—who had been driven by armed force into the most arid part of the country, where they died from hunger and thirst and were exposed to machine-gun fire from aeroplanes.

A war of fascism against the last free native state of Africa will produce reaction and indignation in all black Africa, in all the Arab countries and in Mohammedan India. The first symptoms of this indignation are already visible.

The *Temps* of July 24, 1935, published the following information:

"And thus it is that at the present time in Somaliland, Kenya, Uganda and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, both in the bazaars and in the forests, by the fire for driving off beasts of prey, the natives talk about the war which the Sultan of Abyssinia will have to wage against the foreigners—without distinguishing between the Italians, the French and the British—against these white men who bring peace in the territories which have conquered only by imposing a mass of laws which are contrary to the century-old customs of the blacks. . . .

"In other words, the Italian-Abyssinian conflict in a few months has done more to stir up or re-awaken the spirit of African nationalism, which fell into a state of lethargy when Khartoum was retaken by Lord Kitchener in 1899, than would be accomplished by years of the anti-foreigner, pan-African and pan-Islam propaganda which derives its origin partly from certain American Negroes and partly from certain anti-European Arab committees which are well known to our Intelligence Service."

We must bear in mind these observations of the bourgeois colonisers when we trace the prospect of the formation of a revolutionary situation in association with the prospect of war.

Abyssinia is an economically and politically backward country. No trace of a national-revolutionary movement or even a simple democratic movement has yet been in evidence there. It is a country, moreover, in which the transition from a feudal regime, organised on the basis of semi-independent tribes, to a centralised monarchy is taking place rather slowly. But this is not the decisive question for determining our attitude towards the war contrived by Italy.

Our Italian Communist Party was perfectly right in taking a defeatist position towards the imperialist war of Italian fascism and in launching the slogan "Hands off Abyssinia!" And I can assure you that if the Negus of Abyssinia, by defeating the plans of conquest of fascism, helps the Italian proletariat to strike a death blow at the regime of the blackshirts, no one will reproach it with being "backward." The Abyssinian people is the ally of the Italian proletariat against fascism, and from this platform we assure it of our sympathy. The revolutionary traditions of the Italian people, the traditions of Garibaldi's Volunteers—these traditions in whose name the first Italian internationalists with sincere enthusiasm entered the ranks of the fighters in Poland

and Hungary, in Greece and South America, in every place where the banner of struggle was raised for national liberty, these traditions bring the Italian toilers to the side of the Abyssinian people against the fascist bourgeoisie.

Our Second World Congress in 1920 greeted the struggle of the oppressed peoples of Asia against imperialism as an integral part of the world revolution. It pledged all revolutionaries to support this struggle with all their power and by all means. To-day, in face of the prospect that new reserves of the anti-imperialist revolution in the enormous African continent will be drawn into the struggle owing to the assault of fascism, the Seventh Congress of the Communist International once more proclaims that the Communists are the *vanguard of every struggle against imperialism*.

V. OUR CENTRAL SLOGAN—THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE AND DEFENCE OF THE SOVIET UNION

In face of the frightful reality of the capitalist world which is rushing into war, millions and millions of men, women, youth, and soldiers ask with anxiety: "Is our fate irrevocably fixed? Is it not possible to prevent this terrible scourge which threatens us?"

We Communists, the vanguard of the working class, can reply to this question. We know that war is an inevitable accompaniment of the capitalist regime. Capitalist society, which is based on the exploitation of man by man and the hunt for profit, cannot avoid giving rise to war. But we know equally well that all questions of the development of human society are decided in the final analysis by struggle—by the struggle of the masses. We launch our appeal to the great masses who do not want war: "*Let us unite our forces. Let us fight together for peace. Let us organise the united front of all who want to defend and preserve peace.*"

Even at the gravest moments, the struggle for peace is not a hopeless one. It is not hopeless because, in struggling for peace, we support ourselves now on the strength of the working class which has the power in its hands in the U.S.S.R. Note what the Soviet Union has achieved. War has already menaced its frontiers for years. But by fighting tenaciously for peace, by sacrificing all that it was possible to sacrifice for the cause of peace, by relying on its powerful strength, it has been able to avoid war up to the present. If the Soviet Union had not existed, the breathing space between the two cycles of wars would not have been so long. The peoples would long ago have been

thrown into a new slaughter. Our struggle for peace in which we rely on the strength of the Soviet Union, has, therefore, every chance of being successful. Every month, every week which we gain is of enormous value for humanity. *Conscious of the deepest aspirations of the masses and the vital interests of all humanity, the Communist International puts itself at the head of the campaign for the defence of peace and the Soviet Union. The slogan of peace becomes our central slogan in the fight against war.*

The polemic conducted by Lenin during the world war against the Trotskyists over the slogan of peace was a polemic against the Menshevik tendency to counterpose the slogan of peace to the slogan of defeatism and the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war against the bourgeoisie. In fact, during the imperialist war, the problem could no longer be that of fighting to maintain peace, but of utilising the deep crisis and the wave of hatred against the capitalist world created by the war in order to unleash the proletarian revolution and overthrow the class domination of the bourgeoisie. It was the imperialist powers which spoke to the people of a "just" and "democratic" peace in order to hide the imperialist aims of their war and to rally the masses to the chauvinist policy of defence of the fatherland.

Comrades, we not only do not hide the slogan of the conversion of imperialist war into civil war, which, in case of war, remains the fundamental slogan of Bolsheviks, but by fighting desperately for peace we desire as the result of this fight to unite around the revolutionary vanguard the masses of the workers, toiling peasants and also the petty bourgeoisie, which the proletariat must lead along the path of the conversion of imperialist war into civil war against the bourgeoisie.

"The conversion of imperialist war into civil war signifies above all *revolutionary mass actions*." (Thesis of the Sixth World Congress.) These actions will be all the more possible and all the more threatening for the bourgeoisie, the deeper we succeed in penetrating among the masses and linking ourselves with them, conducting a struggle for the defence of peace prior to the outbreak of war, for the defence of peace which is the most profound desire of the toilers.

If in the period immediately following the war we did not put the slogan of peace at the centre of our agitation, it was because for everyone "peace" then meant the peace of Versailles which we condemned and against which we were fighting. We wanted to avoid even indirectly seeming to give our support to the Versailles system. To-day, when the Versailles system has crumbled

and German National-Socialism is striving to provoke a new war with the aim of forcing on the peoples of Europe a system of oppression still more monstrous than that of Versailles, the defence of peace receives an entirely different content.

We defend peace, not because we are numbered among the flabby Tolstoyans, but because we are striving to ensure the conditions for the victory of the revolution. If war breaks out tomorrow we shall enter the struggle with the greatest determination and fight with all our forces, knowing that this struggle will be a life and death struggle between us and the bourgeoisie. We know that our forces are not negligible. But are they equal to the tremendous tasks confronting us to-day? The united front of the working class has up to now achieved notable successes only in a single big capitalist country. The question of re-establishing the political unity of the working class in a single revolutionary party is only now beginning to be raised. We are, however, still far from its solution:

"It is in the interest of capital, wrote Lenin, "to destroy its enemy (the revolutionary proletariat) bit by bit, before the workers in all countries have united (actually united, i.e., by beginning the revolution). It is in our interest to do all that is possible to take advantage of the slightest opportunity to postpone the decisive battle until the moment (or 'till after') the revolutionary ranks of the single, great, international army have been united."²

By making the fight for peace the centre of our activity, we give the lie in the most striking manner to all the various slanderers ranging from the bourgeoisie to the counter-revolutionary Trotskyists, who have the effrontery to say that Communists are in favour of war, that they base their hopes on war, as if they think that only war will create a situation in which it will be possible to fight for the revolution, for the conquest of power.

We know quite well that in many countries, above all in those which have a fascist dictatorship, there are toilers who are inclined to think that only war can give their class the possibility of renewing the revolutionary struggle. We noted such tendencies in Italy, we note them now in Germany. We know that such tendencies show themselves above all among the elements which have been demoralised by defeats inflicted on the working class. They can be noted in our ranks among opportunist

elements who deny the possibility of carrying on mass work and struggle under all conditions, utilising even the slightest legal possibilities. Any concession to these tendencies or to these elements who desire the outbreak of war, even if they mask their opportunism by revolutionary phrases, can only separate us from the masses. Moreover, we already know by experience that all those who, inside the working-class movement, exalted imperialist war as a means of clearing the path to revolution, have inevitably been driven in the final analysis to break their contracts with the working class and are to-day in the camp of fascism.

In struggling for peace we are carrying out the best defence of the Soviet Union. No one can doubt that the coming war, even if it were to begin as a war between two big imperialist powers or as a war of a big power against a small country, will inevitably tend to develop into and will inevitably become a war against the Soviet Union. Every year and every month of respite is a guarantee for us that the Soviet Union will be in a position to repulse more strongly the attack of the imperialists. Our struggle for peace is thus directly linked up with the peace policy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The cause of peace and the cause of defending the Soviet Union become a single cause, and not a single worker will refuse to fight for it.

VI. THE PEACE POLICY OF THE SOVIET UNION

I think that no toiler, nor anyone, can doubt that the policy of the Soviet Union is a policy of peace. The fact that the Soviet Union pursues a policy of peace is not accidental, is not dependent upon any transient state of things. This policy is organically connected with the very nature of Soviet Power, with the entire history of its development, with all that it is and does.

In 1917, was not the slogan of peace one of the main slogans with which the Bolsheviks proceeded to conquer power? The Soviet government from the very first days of its existence presented itself to the masses as the government that strove for the ending of the imperialist war and for peace. The decree on peace was the first decree which, after a report by Lenin, was passed by the Congress of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies on November 8, 1917, immediately after the formation of the Soviet government. This decree, which proposed the immediate conclusion of a genuine democratic peace and the annulment of all the treaties of the war period, was not followed by the conclusion of peace

² Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. VII, "'Left-Wing' Childishness and Petty

because it was rejected by all the imperialist powers. But this decree secured for the Soviet government the unshakable support of the wide masses of the toilers and helped the Soviet government to win that mass basis which since then has been more and more enlarged and consolidated.

This indestructible linking up of the masses of workers and peasants with their Soviet government on the basis of a policy of peace was reinforced by the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Peace, which offers us an example of the conditions the German imperialists would have imposed on the whole world if they had succeeded in completely realising their plans. In waging a determined struggle against the petty bourgeois adventurism of the so-called "Left" Communists who, in the days of Brest-Litovsk, dreamed of a "revolutionary" war, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party stressed before the masses that the Soviet government was not pursuing a policy of "prestige" but was guided in its foreign policy exclusively by the interests of the preservation and strengthening of the positions held by the revolution.

"Our entire policy and propaganda," wrote Lenin in this connection, "is by no means directed towards drawing the peoples into war, but to put an end to war. Experience also has sufficiently demonstrated that only the socialist revolution is a way out of perpetual wars. . . . But if in doing everything it is in our power to do to accelerate this revolution we find ourselves in the position of a weak Socialist Republic which is being attacked by the imperialist robbers, are we correct in our policy of taking advantage of the dissension between them so as to make their combining against us more difficult? Of course, such a policy is correct. We have pursued it for four years. And the most important fact manifesting this policy was the Brest Peace. While German imperialism was showing resistance, we, by making use of the contradictions of the imperialists among themselves, succeeded in maintaining ourselves even when the Red Army was not yet created."³

Thanks to this policy of peace the Soviet Union has been successful up to now in smashing all the plans of isolation and encirclement concocted against it by the imperialists. All imperialist states of any importance at all have been constrained to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. The U.S.S.R. has concluded non-aggression pacts with all countries with which it has common boundaries, the only exception being

³ Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russian ed., Vol. XXVI.

Japan which has refused to conclude such a pact. From the Genoa conference in 1922 right down to the Disarmament Conference, the Soviet Union has continually and energetically raised the question of complete disarmament. When its proposals for complete disarmament were rejected it came forward with the proposal for partial disarmament, fighting to the very end to diminish the war danger.

In the post-war period, Social Democracy was in power in quite a number of countries. But is there a single Social-Democratic government that did one-hundredth part as much in the cause of peace as the Soviet Union has done? Is there a single Social-Democratic government which declared for the abrogation of all secret treaties concluded by the bourgeoisie for the preparation of war, which solemnly renounced so-called "historical" rights clashing with the interests of other countries or the interests of peace?

The Soviet government gives us an example how the fight for peace must be conducted by its coolness and resoluteness in relation to all the provocations of the Japanese generals. Is there, has there ever been a government that was able to do in the defence of peace what the Soviets did when they proceeded to sell the Chinese Eastern Railway? The U.S.S.R. has shown in this case how one must act if one desires to avoid war. Only the working class in power is able to pursue such a cool and, at the same time, bold policy of peace.

By its peace policy the Soviet Union has proved that only Socialism means peace. It is for this reason that this policy has mobilised and mobilises the proletarians of all countries to fight for Socialism, and rallies around the working class millions of toilers, peasants and intellectuals who hate war and are striving to preserve peace.

But comrades, the peace policy of the Soviet Union is not a policy of capitulation to the enemy, is not a policy causing the U.S.S.R. to close its eyes to realities, to renounce defence of the gains of the Revolution.

"The development of capitalism," wrote Lenin in 1916, "proceeds very unevenly in the various countries. This cannot be otherwise under commodity production. It inevitably follows from this that Socialism cannot be victorious simultaneously in all countries. It will be victorious first in one, or several countries, while the others will for some time remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois. This must not only create friction, but a direct striving on the part of the bourgeoisie of other countries to crush

the victorious proletariat of the Socialist State. In these cases war on our part would be a legitimate and just war, it would be a war for Socialism, for the liberation of other peoples from the bourgeoisie. Engels was quite right when in his letter to Kautsky, September 12, 1882, he openly admitted the possibility of 'wars of defence' on the part of *already victorious* Socialism. What he had in mind was the defence of the victorious proletariat against the bourgeoisie of other countries." *

From this historically determined inevitability of the attack of the imperialists against the Socialist State, pointed out by Lenin as early as 1916, arises the necessity for the U.S.S.R. to defend itself and to possess for this purpose a powerful army. But we must emphasise that this army is by its nature an entirely different army from the armies of all other countries. A war which this army will be compelled to wage will always be a just war of defence.

"The old army," we read in the introductory portion of the decree on the organisation of the Red Army, "was an instrument for the class oppression of the toilers by the bourgeoisie. When power passed to the toilers and to the exploited classes, the necessity arose of creating a new army to be the support of the Soviet government at the present time, the basis for supplanting in the near future the regular army by a general arming of the people and to serve as a support for the coming Socialist Revolution in Europe."

And indeed, since the existence of the Red Army we have for the first time in history a situation where a formidable armed force is put at the service of the cause of peace. Note the hypocrisy with which the representatives of the imperialists at Geneva discussed for years whether it is possible to put an armed force at the service of the so-called international organisation of peace. They discussed it only in order to arrive at the conclusion that this was an unrealisable dream. The armies of the imperialists can indeed never be instruments of peace because of their very class character. But the class character of the Red Army makes it a force which stands in the service of peace, and inspires terror into the hearts of the fascists, the aggressors, the war incendiaries. The Red Army is an army of peace because it is the army of the working class.

On January 1, 1930, 31.2 per cent. of the Red Army were

* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, "The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution."

workers. On January 1, 1934, the percentage of workers had risen to 45.8, while at the beginning of this year it was 49.3 per cent. But this percentage increases on passing from the mass of the membership of the Red Army to its middle and upper commanding cadres. The contradiction which tears apart the bourgeois armies, where the mass of soldiers consists of peasants and workers while the commanding cadres consist of representatives of the most reactionary classes and cliques, this contradiction is unknown to the Red Army. Seventy-two per cent. of the regimental commanders are workers, 90 per cent. of the divisional commanders, while the commanders of army corps consist of working-class elements to the extent of 100 per cent. (*Applause.*) Is a more concrete proof necessary to show that the Red Army is an instrument of peace held in the firm hands of the working class?

The workers and collective farmers who form the overwhelming majority in the Red Army are no longer "soldiers." They are a part of that wonderful Soviet youth whose representatives we greeted at the opening session of our Congress and who constitute the sole example in the world of a new generation, free, mighty, joyful and confident of the future.

They are the sons of the heroes of the Civil War. They are youth which has learned the conscious, voluntary discipline of Socialist labour in the factory and the collective farm. They are a youth which knows that it owes to the revolution and the Soviet power that it has been spared the horror of capitalist factories, of unemployment, of material and spiritual misery. This youth is imbued with the psychology of creation, because the land in which it was born is the only country where factories, cities, socialist industry, collective farms, a new life, are being built on a grand scale. The Soviet Union is the land of the pioneers of a new civilisation, and is consequently the land of peace. The psychopathic urge for conquest, decadent raptures over bloodshed and predatory wars as the sole "sanitary measures" for humanity, can be engendered only in countries of decaying capitalism.

The proletarians in the capitalist countries know that the Red Army is headed by the most devoted fighters for the Revolution. They know that at the head of the Red Army stands our Comrade Voroshilov, a champion of the proletarian revolution, the son of a railroad worker and a charwoman, a man who at the age of seven worked in a coal mine at a wage of ten kopeks per day, who, a smith by profession, a member of the Bolshevik Party

even before the Revolution of 1905, a man whose entire life is linked with the struggles of the vanguard of the Russian workers under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, one who has always been a most disciplined Bolshevik, one of the best pupils of Lenin and Stalin. (*The delegates stand and make a mighty ovation in honour of Comrade Voroshilov.*)

Will not the miners from the Ruhr and the North of France, will not the unfortunate workers in the textile factories of Japan recognise in Comrade Voroshilov and in the other leaders of the Red Army their class brothers and comrades-in-arms?

The revolutionary workers of the whole world know that in the ranks of the Red Army the percentage of Bolshevik Party members and Young Communist League members is steadily increasing. They know that the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, created by Lenin, which was forged during the Civil War, under the direct leadership of Lenin and was led to victory by the great Stalin, is guided by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the sole Party so far which has given an example of persistent and victorious struggle against imperialist war.

Every step forward, therefore, in strengthening the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army is greeted with the greatest joy by all the exploited and by all friends of peace in all the capitalist countries.

The international proletariat knows and understands that humanity would long ago have been dragged into the abyss of war if it had not been for the Red Army; it understands that the existence of this powerful force is the guarantee of peace and of the victory of the working class.

I am convinced that I express the will of all those present at this Congress, the will of the toilers of the whole world, in sending our most ardent greetings to the Red Army.

Long Live the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, the bulwark of peace, the army of Socialism and Revolution, the hope of the workers of the whole world. (*Prolonged, stormy applause.*)

VII. MUTUAL AID PACTS AND THE INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAT

Comrades, since the peace policy of the Soviet Union presumes the consideration by the proletarian state of the contradictions between the capitalist countries, its bounds are determined in their extent by the magnitude, intensity and nature of these contradictions, and its concrete forms cannot but change when the international situation changes as a whole.

This has not been understood by those who have evinced astonishment at the modification in the Soviet Union's attitude towards the League of Nations. The League of Nations was formed as an international organisation under the leadership of the Entente powers for the purpose of maintaining the "order" established by the post-war treaties. From the day of its foundation it has been undermined by antagonisms and conflicts. But when the problem of the repartition of the world reached an extreme accentuation, when some of the big imperialist powers, which thought that the hour had struck when this problem could be solved by force of arms, developed their war drive, the League of Nations began to disintegrate.

The masses see that the League showed its impotence in face of the seizure of Manchuria by Japan, in face of the wars waged by the vassals of the United States and Great Britain in South America, and in face of the aggression of fascist Italy against Abyssinia. But this impotence is accompanied by hesitation and resistance on the part of the powers which at the moment are not directly interested in war. The most aggressive countries have left the League of Nations: Japan in 1932, Germany in 1934, and the League of Nations, although formally making no alteration in its organisation and statutes, nevertheless offers a certain obstacle to the realisation of the plans of these powers and can be utilised to postpone the outbreak of war. The Soviet Union took this situation into account when it changed its attitude toward the League of Nations. The entry of the Soviet Union into the League of Nations showed the masses that the leaders of the Soviet Union are not doctrinaires, but Marxists who correctly appraise the relation of forces existing in the capitalist world and who know how to make use of even the smallest possibility to extend their action in defence of peace and in the interests of the Revolution.

The entry into the League of Nations was followed by further still bolder steps in the unfolding of the peace policy of the Soviet Union in proportion as the threat of war increased and the contradictions sharpened between the countries that are instigators of war and the countries that at the moment are interested in the preservation of peace. This contradiction can be made use of to a greater extent than all previous ones because it determined the temporary coincidence of the permanent aims of the peace policy of the Soviet Union and the temporary aims of the policy of certain capitalist countries.

The U.S.S.R. took a great step forward towards the rapprochement between it and several small weak states, whose independence, as we have already pointed out, is threatened by the war plans of German fascism. The rapprochement with these states, for which the aggression of National-Socialism represents an exceptionally concrete and serious danger, led, as you know, to formulating the definition of an aggressor. This definition is of interest to us here less as a diplomatic event than as the concrete expression of the real connection which is coming into being between the workers of the Soviet Union who are defending the achievements of the proletarian revolution on the one hand, and on the other, the small peoples and small nations that are defending their liberty and national integrity, and all the friends of peace.

Realising the rôle which the national question plays in the life of the peoples, we have to reckon on the absolute probability that in case of a war provoked by German fascism, certain peoples of Europe who have secured their independence at the cost of great suffering will prefer, in order to preserve it, to fight on the side of the Soviet Union as the only country in the world where the national question has been solved in accordance with the aspirations of the peoples by granting to every nationality the right of self-determination. At all events, we know that this is in the interests of the peoples of Czechoslovakia, Lithuania and a number of other small states, and that it is the duty of the revolutionary vanguard of the working class to prevent the bourgeoisie of these countries from pursuing a policy which runs counter to these interests.

The proposal for the conclusion of the Eastern Pact was made after establishing the definition of the aggressor. Being based on recognition of peace as indivisible and of the impossibility of separating the danger of war menacing the East of Europe from the threat of war in the West, this proposal was intended to achieve the result of putting the instigators of war into a difficult position and of rallying all friends of peace, whoever they were.

As is well known, the proposal for the conclusion of an Eastern Pact was rejected by the warmongers, and this was bound to be followed by the establishment of an especially close connection between the Soviet Union and the states interested in active resistance to the present aggressors—which has led to the conclusion of pacts of mutual aid between the Soviet Union on the one hand, and France and Czechoslovakia on the other.

The question of these mutual aid pacts is one which is of the greatest interest at this moment to international working-class public opinion. It is necessary that we should dwell on it in more detail. The mutual aid pacts concluded by the Soviet Union are in accordance with the lines of development of the peace policy of the Soviet Union, the foundations of which were laid down by Lenin. They are peace pacts, publicly arrived at, open to all, and by no means secret war agreements, like those which were concluded by tsarist diplomacy or the pact which has been concluded between German fascism and fascist Poland. At the same time, they are profoundly different from all those platonic acts and declarations, entirely empty of any real political content and inspired solely by hypocrisy, such as the declarations with which post-war diplomacy has made us familiar—beginning with the Kellogg Pact, and extending right up to the final declaration of the Disarmament Conference.

The mutual aid pacts concluded by the Soviet Union are acts of a serious, positive political character, aiming at uniting all forces which it is possible to attract at this moment to active defence of peace. On this account we are surprised that anyone could find it strange that the conclusion of the mutual aid pact with France was accompanied by a declaration of Comrade Stalin, in which he expressed "complete understanding and approval of the policy of national defence pursued by France for maintaining its armed forces at the level corresponding to the needs of its security." Rather, I am of the opinion that it would have been strange if a declaration of this kind had not followed, for the absence of such a precise definition of standpoint would have deprived the mutual aid Pact of all its efficacy as an instrument of positive peace policy.

From the point of view of theory, the possibility under certain conditions of concluding an agreement envisaging even military collaboration between the working-class state and a capitalist state is not open to doubt. Lenin wrote about this more than once.

In May, 1918, when a proposal for a military agreement was made to the Soviet Republic by the Anglo-French allies, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party rejected the proposal on grounds, not of principle but of simple political expediency, not considering such an agreement useful in the existing circumstances. Lenin wrote at the time:

"Without renouncing in general military agreements with one

of the imperialist coalitions against the other in cases where such an agreement, without violating the basis of Soviet Power, could reinforce the position of the latter and paralyse the attack of any imperialist power against it, we, at the present moment, cannot accept a military agreement with the Anglo-French coalition."*

Thus, comrades, the position of the Bolsheviks in regard to this question is absolutely clear. Without violating the basis of Soviet power, but, on the contrary, reinforcing this basis, they do everything necessary so as not to have against them a consolidated bloc of capitalist countries. They consider, and, of course, quite rightly, that the infantry, cavalry, guns, tanks and bombing planes of German fascism are something very concrete, and they strive to oppose them by something equally concrete. The proletariat of the Soviet Union and the Bolshevik Party in power in the Soviet Union cannot and should not adopt any other attitude.

And what of our Parties in the capitalist countries? It is precisely on them that our enemies of all shades and varieties attempted to concentrate their attacks; they looked for some contradiction alleged to exist between Comrade Stalin's declaration and the policy of the Communist Parties, particularly in France and Czechoslovakia, which are struggling against their own bourgeoisies, refusing to vote military budgets, in France voting against the two-years military service law, etc. The bourgeoisie began this line of attack, they were followed by the Socialists, and very soon the counter-revolutionary Trotskyists and renegades of all kinds outdid all the rest in lying slanders.

Taken as a whole, our Parties succeeded in judging the situation correctly. There have been some wavering, there have been individual comrades who have even been able to think that the conclusion of the mutual aid pacts means losing sight of the perspective of revolution in Europe. Practical experience has rapidly convinced these comrades that they were grossly mistaken and that, on the contrary, the new pact by which the Soviet Union confirmed its peace policy could only enhance the prestige of the proletarian state in the eyes of the toilers of all countries, in the eyes of the whole world, and consequently also the prestige of Socialism and the proletarian revolution. The bourgeois who imagined that they could throw the Communist movement into confusion by their declaring that it was now they who were in agreement with the Communists, with the

Bolsheviks, with the Soviet Union, have been grossly deceived. The masses in France and in Czechoslovakia replied: If it is true that the Soviets acted rightly, well then we shall vote for the Communists, but, of course, for the real ones.

There have been comrades who have compared the conclusion of the mutual aid pacts to a compulsory retreat under the pressure of the enemy. But these few comrades have only demonstrated that they are not able to distinguish between a retreat and an advance. Could one conceive a more remarkable success than the fact that a big capitalist country is compelled to sign an agreement of mutual aid with the Soviet Union, an agreement the content of which is defence against an aggressor, defence of peace and of the frontiers of the country of proletarian dictatorship?

In spite of the few wavering mentioned, all our Sections, and in particular the Communist Parties in countries directly interested in this question, have shown a very high degree of political maturity. They have understood that as far as they were concerned it was important not only to understand and approve an act emphasising the peace policy of the Soviet Union, but that it was essential to determine their own political line, taking account of the situation in which they are placed, a situation which is profoundly different from that of the Bolshevik Party and working class in the U.S.S.R.

For us it is absolutely indisputable that there is a complete identity of aim between the peace policy of the Soviet Union and the policy of the working class and Communist Parties of the capitalist countries. There is not, and cannot be, any doubt in our ranks on this subject. We not only defend the Soviet Union in general. We defend concretely its whole policy and each of its actions. But this identity of aim by no means signifies that at every given moment there must be a complete coincidence in all acts and on all questions between the tactics of the proletariat and Communist Parties that are still struggling for power and the concrete tactical measures of the Soviet proletariat and the C.P.S.U., which already have power in their hands in the Soviet Union.

Examples of this non-coincidence between the positions of the Party of the proletariat in various countries in regard to some concrete question could be multiplied.

Let us take, for example the policy of the Bolshevik Party in 1917 after the February Revolution. During this period, the task of the working class and of its revolutionary vanguard through-

* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXX, Russian ed.

out the capitalist world consisted in struggling for the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war against the bourgeoisie, that is to say, in struggling for a revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist order. But, in Russia, after the February Revolution the position of the working class was different to that in other countries, for in Russia the first act of the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war had already been accomplished. In all other countries, the working class could achieve the conversion of the imperialist war into civil war only by struggling to overthrow the national coalition governments then in power. In Russia, on the contrary, the aim which Lenin put before the vanguard of the working class during the first period after February was not that of the immediate overthrow of the Provisional government.

"Now it was no longer possible to advance directly to the overthrow of the Government, because it was bound up with the Soviets, which were under the influence of the defencists, and the Party would have had to wage war both against the government and against the Soviets, which was beyond its strength."*

It was necessary above all to win over the masses to Bolshevism and to strive for the creation of a government based on the Soviets, where the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries still had a majority; this would allow of unmasking the counter-revolutionary policy of these petty-bourgeois parties and isolating them from the masses. It was necessary, therefore, to overthrow the Provisional Government, but "not immediately and not along the usual lines."

Was the aim for which the Bolsheviks were struggling in Russia and the revolutionary Social-Democrats in the other countries the same? Yes, it was the same. But was there at that particular time a complete coincidence in the position of the Bolsheviks in Russia and of the revolutionary Social-Democrats in the other countries on this central question of attitude towards the government? No, no such coincidence existed, and its absence was a consequence of the different degree of development of the revolutionary struggle and the difference in the relation of the class forces in the different countries.

It was just for this reason that Lenin wrote that the Bolsheviks under Tseretelli and Kerensky were no longer defeatists, although the supreme goal of their policy remained as before the

transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war. In this domain also, the same revolutionary policy demanded from the working class after the February Revolution, under the Tseretelli-Kerensky government, different tactics from those of the working class in the capitalist countries where the revolution was not yet so far advanced.

A classic example of non-comprehension of the fact that the tactical positions of the proletarian Parties in regard to the same concrete question need not necessarily be identical in all countries is provided by Lenin in the discussion in 1916 with Kievsky on the right of nations to self-determination. In regard to self-determination, Kievsky then accused Lenin of "interpreting the demand dualistically."

"He," wrote Lein, "thinks we are 'dualists,' first, because we call upon the workers in the oppressing nations to do something different—in relation only to the national problem—from that which we call upon the workers in the oppressed nations to do.

"In order to determine whether or not P. Kievsky's 'monism' is the same as Dühring's 'monism,' we must see what the objective situation is.

"Is the actual condition of the workers in the oppressing nations the same as that of the workers in the oppressed nations from the standpoint of the national problem?

"No, they are not the same."*

Pointing out further that Kievsky's words about the "monistic action of the International" are an "empty sonorous phrase, and nothing more," Lenin continues:

"In order that the action of the International, which in real life consists of workers who are divided into those belonging to oppressing nations and those belonging to oppressed nations, may be monistic action, propaganda must be carried on differently in each case. This is how we must argue from the point of view of real (not Dühring) monism, from the point of view of Marxian materialism!"

"An example? We have (in the legal press over two years ago!) given the example of Norway, and nobody has attempted to refute us. In this concrete case, taken from life, the action of the Norwegian and Swedish workers was 'monistic,' unified, internationalist, only because and in so far as the Swedish workers unconditionally championed the right of Norway to

* Stalin, *The October Revolution*, p. 75.

secede, while the Norwegian workers raised the question of secession only conditionally. If the workers had not been *unconditionally* in favour of the right of the Norwegians to secede they would have been *chauvinists*, brothers-in-arms of the chauvinist Swedish landlords, who wished to "retain" Norway by force, by war. If the Norwegian workers had not raised the question of secession *conditionally*, i.e., so that even members of the Social-Democratic Party could conduct propaganda and vote against secession, the Norwegian workers would have failed in their duty as internationalists and would have sunk to narrow, *bourgeois*, Norwegian nationalism. Why? Because the separation was effected by the *bourgeoisie*, and not by the proletariat! Because the Norwegian bourgeoisie, like any other bourgeoisie, always strives to drive a wedge between the workers of its own country and the workers of foreign countries! Because every democratic demand (including self-determination) is, for the class conscious workers, *subordinated* to the higher interests of Socialism. . . . To fail to understand this difference, which is a prerequisite for the 'monistic action' of the International, is on a par with failing to understand why 'monistic action' against the tsarist army, say near Moscow, demands that the revolutionary forces marching from Nizhni should proceed westward, while those from Smolensk should proceed eastward."*

Our comrades of the French Communist Party and of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party have understood that their policy must be determined by the same Marxist-Leninist method, which demands that the concrete circumstances be taken into account. For this reason, in addressing themselves to the bourgeoisie of their countries, they could and had to say to them:

"Gentlemen, you have signed a pact, a limited pact, with the working class of the Soviet Union that has the power in its hands, but you have not signed any pact with the working class of our country, with us. We have no guarantee that you will not utilise your army, which continues to be a class army, against the working class of our country and against the colonial peoples, our allies in the struggle against imperialism. We have no guarantee at all that you will not continue to make the poor, and not the rich, pay the necessary expenses for the organisation of your army. We have no control over the manner in which your class government and your reactionary and fascist General Staff will spend the money that you take from the poor in order to pay for the organisation of the army. We have not even any guarantee that, when the decisive moment arrives, you will remain loyal to the pact that you are signing to-day.

* "Ibid," pp. 292-93.

"For all these reasons, gentlemen, we can neither vote your military budget nor give up the struggle against your government. But please note that this does not mean that we have no interest in the pact that you have concluded with the Soviet Union or that we are indifferent to the manner in which you give effect to it. We know that in your ranks there are those who are against this pact, that there exists a section of the bourgeoisie who would like to tear it up. We, indeed, will defend the pact with all our strength because it is an instrument in the struggle for peace and for the defence of the Soviet Union. We shall vote for the pact in Parliament and we shall expose any attempt to pursue a policy which is different from or in contradiction to the obligations ensuing from the pact."

Those who do not understand the profound inner consistency of this position adopted by our comrades in France and Czechoslovakia will never understand anything of the real dialectics of events and of revolutionary dialectics, even if they fancy themselves to be highly intelligent and logical persons, such as Leon Blum, for instance, fancies himself to be. But our revolutionary dialectic has been understood by the masses, as the comrades of the French Party and of the Czechoslovakian Party have reported to us, and that is quite good enough for us. (Applause.)

VIII. THE UNITED FRONT IN THE FIGHT FOR PEACE AND IN DEFENCE OF THE SOVIET UNION

Comrades, in the fight for peace, against imperialist war and in defence of the Soviet Union, our immediate basic political task consists in creating the widest united front of the masses of workers and peasants, and petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals. It is just in this sphere, comrades, in the sphere of the struggle for peace, that our united front policy can score the greatest successes.

It is no accident that during recent years the first important step for overcoming the resistance of the Social-Democratic organisations to the united front was made by the anti-war movement, whose first slogan was proclaimed from the Amsterdam Anti-War Congress by Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse, those inspired champions of the struggle against imperialist war. The Communists have assisted the development of this movement with all their strength, and will continue to do so. But we cannot declare ourselves satisfied, either with the progress which has been made in this field or with the successes of the united front

in the anti-war struggle in general. The volume of the united front movement against war is still not in accord with the intensity of war preparations on the part of the capitalists, is still not in accord with the acuteness and gravity of the war danger. All our Sections are faced with the task of doing all that is necessary so that the fight for peace will embrace all those who do not want war, all those who hate war, all those who are ready to fight for peace: Social-Democratic workers, the masses of those with pacifist inclinations, women, children, national minorities that are under the threat of war.

The Position of Social-Democracy.

The state of confusion and internal collapse in which Social Democracy finds itself is manifested in a particularly striking way in the attitude of the Social-Democratic parties to the question of war. The Social-Democratic parties, which only a few years ago expressed themselves—even if rather indefinitely—against defence of the fatherland and spoke of certain forms of mass action in case of war, have since begun to pass over more openly to collaboration with the imperialist bourgeoisie in regard to defence of the bourgeois fatherland.

The Swiss, Dutch and Finnish Social-Democratic parties, for instance, have acted in this way. So have also the British Labour Party and Trade Union Congress. At the same time, the will to struggle against war, for peace and for defence of the Soviet Union, is strengthening among the masses of Social-Democratic workers, and a process of differentiation in connection with the war question is taking place in the Social-Democratic Parties and organisations. In the Left wing of the Socialist Party in France, there is developing, although with great vacillations, a tendency towards the position of revolutionary struggle against war, and in particular, to renounce defence of the fatherland under a bourgeois régime. In the Social-Democratic Parties which have been driven into emigration by fascism, there has also been observable tendencies, as yet timid, for linking the struggle against war with the struggle for the overthrow of fascism. We cannot but welcome and do everything possible to assist the approach to a revolutionary position on the part of these Left groups of Social-Democracy. And we shall achieve it by entering into a united front with the Social-Democratic workers, while at the same time never refraining from systematically exposing all hesitation and theoretical inaccuracy in regard to this question, which is one

of the most complicated and important questions of Marxist-Leninist theory.

At the last plenary meeting of the Executive Committee of the Second International, a resolution on the struggle against war was adopted in which we find a statement concerning the necessity of concentrating fire against German National Socialism and of defending the Soviet Union. This resolution, speaking of the attitude which should be taken up by the working class in case of war, refers to the resolution of the Stuttgart Congress.

We have the right to ask the Social-Democratic leaders: What value has the reference to the Stuttgart resolution, which speaks of utilising the crises resulting from war for hastening the overthrow of the class rule of the capitalists, if nothing is done to carry out these directives? In order to carry out the directives of the Stuttgart resolution, it is essential already to-day to bring about the unity of action of the working class in the struggle for peace.

If you continue to come out, as heretofore, against the united front, if you hinder it being carried out, then the reference to the Stuttgart decisions cannot have any value and is not a guarantee of your position in the future, just as the adoption of the Stuttgart resolution in 1907 was not a guarantee for the Second International against the collapse of August 4, 1914.

The Pacifist Movement

In the pacifist movement we also note a very interesting differentiation. The feeling of horror for the war which the capitalists and fascists are preparing evokes opposition to the war on pacifist grounds among more and more considerable sections. The peace ballot organised in Great Britain by the League of Nations Union and in which eleven million people participated, representing more than half the adult population of the country, is a clear example of the enormous extent of pacifist trends among the masses. The vast majority of those who took part in this ballot not only expressed their hatred for war, but their wish that the instigators of war and the aggressors be effectively resisted. We revolutionary workers understand and correctly appreciate the aspirations of the masses who show this pacifist tendency, even if it is still sometimes expressed in a naive and politically false way.

Our place is at the side of these masses, explaining to them what they do not yet understand well, at the same time assisting

them in fighting to achieve all that is fundamentally just and human in their strivings for peace. This is all the more necessary because we are not absolutely sure of the path that the pacifist masses will take in the future. If they establish connections with the working class and its vanguard, they may form a formidable barrier against war and the instigators of war. If the opposite is the case, the pacifist illusions which still dominate these masses may impel them to a position which will not merely not hinder war but will be used by the instigators of a new imperialist war for their own ends. Do not the German National Socialist leaders in their furious campaign for war have recourse to deceptive "peace" demagogic? In the pacifist camp is there not a trend nourished partly by people under the spell of pacifist illusions and partly by counter-revolutionary elements and renegades from Communism, a trend which, under cover of desiring "justice" for Germany also, in reality helps the war propaganda of German fascism?

Therefore, we must penetrate among the pacifist masses and carry out a big work of enlightenment among them, using forms of organisation and action which are adapted to the level of consciousness of these masses and which give them the possibility of taking the first step in the effective struggle against war and capitalism. We must always take two things into account. The first is that the organisation of the pacifist masses cannot and must not be a Communist organisation; the second is that, in working in this organisation Communists must never give up explaining with the greatest patience and insistence their own point of view on all the problems of the struggle against war.

In this way success can be achieved in emancipating the sincere pacifists from the influence of illusions and mistaken views, and exposing those hypocritical pacifists who by their policy screen the preparation for war. Unfortunately, in many cases it must be admitted that our comrades follow the opposite line to this. On the one hand they attempt to give to the organisations of the pacifist masses the character of a Communist organisation and introduce into it inappropriate methods of leadership by the Party. On the other hand, they neglect their obligation of conducting propaganda of our correct Leninist position on the question of struggle against war. It is necessary to correct both these mistakes.

The Struggle for the Immediate Demands of the Masses The struggle for the immediate economic and political demands

of the working class, toiling peasantry and all sections of the toiling population must play a primary rôle in the organisation of the united front for the fight for peace. The very preparation for war carried out by the bourgeoisie at the expense of the toilers forces the masses to take up this struggle for their immediate demands.

Note the record figure reached by the war budgets during recent years. This means that the burden of taxation which oppresses the workers, peasants, craftsmen, and small shopkeepers, is continually increasing. The profits of the war industry are also reaching record figures, while wages are falling more and more, particularly in the countries which are most intensely preparing for war.

The preparation for war, especially in the fascist countries, is accompanied by measures for organisation of the whole of war industry and for adapting the entire economy of the country to war needs, and this has an immediate effect on the position of the workers, both from the economic and the political point of view. In Germany, a plan for the reorganisation of the whole of industry for war purposes is already in process of operation. The same thing is taking place in Japan. In Italy, the introduction of corporations is nothing but a form of the centralisation of industry in case of war.

In the war industry, the workers are already subjected to a war régime and this emphasises the necessity for specially intense work in this industry.

Unfortunately, we have to record that in this respect a serious defect in the organisation of our struggle for peace is to be observed.

The struggle for the immediate demands of the workers, peasants and toiling masses in general is our most effective means for exposing the chauvinist demagogic of fascism, of demonstrating the lying character of the fables propagated by them: the lie about race, about "war in the interests of all," about the "state above classes," about the "proletarian nation which is struggling against capitalist nations," about the "necessity of conquering a place in the sun," etc.

In the course of the struggle for the real interests of the proletariat and toiling masses against exploiters and oppressors, the workers and the whole mass of toilers become educated in the spirit of proletarian internationalism. Hereby the weapon is being forged which in the final analysis will give us the possibility of shattering chauvinist propaganda. But for this to be

a really sharp weapon we must undertake the defence not only of the immediate economic interests of the masses, but also of their political demands and aspirations. We must know how to interpret all their interests, we must show that it is precisely the working class and its vanguard that has the task of solving all the problems concerning every section of the toilers in the given country.

I shall not repeat in this connection what has already been said by Comrade Dimitrov concerning the necessity of taking into account and esteeming the revolutionary traditions of the people, of understanding and supporting their national demands. In our fight against imperialist war, the directive given to all revolutionary workers by Comrade Dimitrov in his historic report acquires a still greater significance at the present moment when we speak of the tasks of the working class and Communists in the struggle for national liberation and for support of wars for national liberation, when we are confronted by the prospect of a new upsurge of the revolutionary movement of the colonial peoples against imperialism.

Women in the Fight for Peace

Another serious defect is the inadequate development of work among women. It must be frankly admitted, with the exception of the Communist Parties of a few countries, we are at the present time devoting less attention than before to work among women. As far as the fight against war is concerned, this is a most serious defect. National Socialism has forced women back into the situation they were in a century ago. In Germany, and in all other countries, they are directly affected by the frantic preparations for war. The high cost of living, increased taxation and militarisation measures affect women in every aspect of their life:—as workers, as mothers and as wives. In a number of countries, women have already been directly drawn into war preparations, especially in Germany and Japan. The active participation of women in war, not only in the factories but also in the army service, is being generally provided for. In the war industry the factories are even now drawing in women workers in large numbers, because they are worse paid and more severely exploited. In Germany in 1933, for example, where, in accordance with instructions of the fascist government, 150,000 workers were discharged from the factories, not a single woman worker was discharged from the armament factories; on the contrary, thousands of new women workers were taken on in factories already working for war.

In noting these facts, we must not close our eyes to the tremendous attention which the bourgeoisie and, primarily, the most reactionary parties of the bourgeoisies, are devoting to the organisation of women in the most varied ways. It would be absurd to think that this work has not yielded the bourgeoisie any results. Of course, pacifist trends among the masses of women are extremely strong. We know that in the demonstrations against war, in the protest actions which have been frequently taken in various countries against war and against gas manœuvres, women have played a most prominent part. But that cannot satisfy us. As against the forms and methods of organising the masses of women utilised by the bourgeoisie, and particularly by the fascists, we are still not carrying on sufficiently effective work. We are marking time, our work in this sphere is not on a level befitting the tasks of our Parties which alone strive for the complete emancipation of women and also conduct consistent struggle for peace.

In France, we have a very interesting example of the development of a mass movement of women against war and fascism. The large pacifist organisations which have joined this movement contain hundreds of thousands of women belonging to all political tendencies, as well as women not belonging to any party at all. Our participation in this movement was very successful, and we regret that the example of France has not been followed in other countries. Thanks to active participation in this movement, our comrades have found an effective way of establishing contact with those masses of women who until now have stood aloof from all political activity. Even in France, however, not all our comrades correctly understood how Communists should approach such a movement. Our comrades do not always understand that in order to succeed in reaching the masses of women who are still not under our influence just as to succeed in reaching the pacifist masses in general, we must take account of the nature of the organisation to which they belong.

We must by no means endeavour to destroy such an organisation; on the contrary, we must discover how to collaborate with it in the most varied forms in order to penetrate into its ranks. In some cases, our comrades, instead of understanding and pursuing this correct organisational and political line, replaced broad mass work in the existing organisations by the creation of a narrow and sectarian Communist women's organisation. This renders more difficult the creation of a real mass movement of women on behalf of peace and against war.

The same lagging behind is to be observed in the organisation of a united front of the youth in the fight against war. Yet it is just among the youth that the preparation for a new imperialist war makes itself most strongly felt; it is just among the youth that the bourgeoisie is pushing the preparation for war with particular vigour. It is above all the youth that fascism fascinates by chauvinist and war propaganda. On the other hand, in practically every country the youth have already been seized by the monstrous war machine as a result of measures for militarisation.

These measures are to-day common to all the fascist countries; but they also extend to the democratic countries in a more or less open form. In Germany, all forms of youth organisation are connected in one way or another with military training. In Italy, military training begins at the age of eight, and quite recently a new organisation for children from six years of age has been formed which also has the aim of militarist and chauvinist propaganda.

These widespread activities of the bourgeoisie in regard to the militarisation of the youth must be countered by us with the aid of equally widespread activity aiming at wresting the younger generation from the influence of the bourgeoisie and fascism. In spite of progress in this direction achieved very recently, it must nevertheless be admitted, comrades, that such actions on our part are either still not being conducted at all or are being conducted to an insufficient degree.

A fact we cannot deny is that while many bourgeois trends and parties—from the fascist to the Catholic—have succeeded in creating a big organised youth movement, we have not yet succeeded in achieving this aim to the required extent. This is one of the basic weaknesses of our anti-war work. And, naturally, not the least cause of this backwardness is the fact that we have underestimated the influence of the bourgeoisie on the younger generation.

We have contended ourselves with saying, and it is absolutely correct in itself, that the class-consciousness of the masses cannot be lulled and the class struggle cannot be suppressed for long. This, of course, is true. The experience that the younger generation is gaining in the factories and the experience it will gain during a war will inevitably lead to the destruction of the influence of the bourgeoisie and of fascism among the youth. But we cannot and must not wait. We must prevent the youth enrolled in the mass fascist organisations from undergoing the

tragic experience that our generations underwent in the world war. We want to have the youth already fighting side by side with us for peace. We must therefore direct and accelerate the process of destroying the influence of the bourgeoisie among the youth. We must find a way to the younger generation, we must understand their mood and what is in their minds. And if, in order to find the way to this new generation, it is necessary to speak a new language, to cast aside empty formulas, to do away with the old schemes, to change our methods of work and to change the forms of our organisation—very well, we shall do so without any hesitation. For this, it is first of all necessary to make a serious, attentive and fundamental study of everything that is going on among the younger generation. I should like to say to the comrades who are directing the work among the youth on a national and international scale that they should more often bear in mind the last words which Lenin addressed to the Young Communist International in his letter to the Third World Congress of that organisation:

"I hope that in spite of your *great name* you will not forget the most important thing, the necessity of actively advancing training of the youth and *study*."

Comrades, you must not remain content with your *great name*. Only by studying and mastering everything that is taking place in the younger generation will you be enabled to accomplish your task. (*Applause.*)

We must not be afraid, we should go wherever the younger generation is to be found. This means that the forms of organisation of the militant united front of the youth in the fight for peace and against war must be extremely flexible, differing in accordance with country and circumstance. In the bourgeois-democratic countries we must follow the example set by our French comrades, who have at last been able to find the way to the youth. We can only welcome and support with all our strength such steps as the calling of the Students' Congress and the recent widespread activity of the World Youth Committee for struggle against war and fascism. In participating in these movements we must be able to play a leading part not by advertising the fact, but by winning the confidence of the youth who will see in us the most ardent champions of their vital interests, the most convinced defenders of all their aspirations.

In the fascist countries, it is absolutely essential to bridge the abyss that in some cases already exists, or which is in process

of being created, between the old generation of revolutionary workers and Communists and the younger generation of toilers.

An end must be put once for all to such cases as we have had in Italy, where for instance, in a large industrial city, among several hundred comrades there is not a single young comrade under twenty years of age, while tens of thousands are enrolled in the fascist organisations, all the more so since experience shows that the youth drawn into the fascist organisations is such that contact with us will rapidly cause it to acquire the ability to be fired with indignation, to protest, and to fight against the fascists. There is only one method of bridging the gap between the old and young generations, namely, to penetrate the fascist organisations, to work within these organisations, to organise a united front and establish our nuclei within the fascist organisations themselves in the forms demanded by the situation. We must go so far as to transform whole sections of fascist youth organisations into points of support for our anti-war work.

We do not want to surrender the youth to fascism. We do not want to allow the youth to be turned into shock troops for the warmongers. We want to turn the youth into shock troops for our fight for peace. (*Applause.*)

IX. THE ARMY AND OUR TASKS

Comrades, the first factor which determines our work in the army at the present moment is that the capitalist armies are more and more assuming a mass character. In the early post-war years the armament race proceeded basically along the line of the improvement of the quality, and not of the increase of the quantity, of the army. It was during this period that certain bourgeois military theorists developed the theory that war will no more be conducted by mass armies but instead by small professional armies, strongly armed and mechanised. The very development of imperialist rivalry, however, put an end to these attempts of the bourgeoisie to forego mass armies.

Even before 1935, the secret arming of Germany changed the balance of military power and provoked a new armament race. From the beginning of 1935, when the German National-Socialists restored the German army on the basis of compulsory military service, the whole relation of forces in Europe has been upset. The presence in the centre of Europe of a tremendous army, powerfully equipped and mechanised, combined with the frantic aggressive character of German fascism has intensified the

armament race to an unprecedented extent. Fascist Italy, believing itself to be directly menaced by the plans for the annexation of Austria, has carried out a succession of partial mobilisations, as a result of which to-day nearly a million men are under arms. Great Britain, leading circles of which support German armaments, France and all the other European countries have responded to this provocative arming on the part of Germany by strengthening their armed forces.

On the other hand, technical progress itself causes the armies to take on a mass character, for the more complicated the weapons, the greater is the number of men required for serving the army. Finally, the experience of the war of 1914-18 also demonstrated that the superiority of an army at decisive moments depends to a considerable extent on the number of reserves it possesses. The huge modern armies require just as huge reserves.

This emphasis on the mass character of armies, which is very clearly expressed in the more recent bourgeois laws for the military training and mobilisation of the whole population, accentuates the contradiction between the mass character of bourgeois armies and the reactionary aims for which these armies are employed by the bourgeoisie. This contradiction becomes still greater with the growth of fascism. It is precisely on account of this fact that the bourgeoisie, not being in a position to lessen the mass character of its army, resort to the fascisation of the latter so as to prevent the danger of mutinies.

The fascisation of the army finds expression in a number of measures, especially in the organisation of special propaganda in the army itself.

Never has chauvinist propaganda been conducted amongst the soldiers with such intensity and with such various means. In carrying its propaganda into the army, fascism is trying to convert the army into a point of support for its policy. At the same time, in each of the armies the bourgeoisie increases the number of those elements which it regards as particularly reliable either by reason of the preferential treatment they receive, or in consequence of their constant connection with military organisations (the professional army).

In the German army of 1914 (on the eve of the war) the permanent cadres numbered 145,064 persons, i.e., 18 per cent. of the total army. In the present German army the number of such persons permanently serving in the army is 397,000, i.e., 30.3 per cent. of the total army.

In Italy and the other fascist countries, the military-fascist

organisations organised for the purpose of civil war are in one form or another points of support for the fascisation of the army. The higher command, the officers of the higher ranks, the instructors and certain military-technical sections form the rampart of fascism in the armies of all countries.

In the countries of bourgeois democracy, we must expose this fascisation of the army as one of the most dangerous forms of concrete preparation for war. As a counter to this fascisation, we must, in our consistent and thoroughgoing struggle for peace, develop our anti-fascist work in the army. We shall not surrender the mass of the soldiers to the fascists. All penetration of fascism into the army is a menace to peace. Every effective measure against such penetration assists the defence of peace.

The fascists are instilling their anti-proletarian, militarist and chauvinist policy into the army. This gives the more justification for the working class in the countries of bourgeois democracy to demand that the army should be democratised by granting the soldiers all political rights. We demand that every soldier should have the right fully to express his opinion regarding the war propaganda that is being conducted in the army by the fascists, that he should have the possibility both inside and outside the army of expressing his desire for peace. We demand that all political rights should be granted to the soldiers because we are certain that an unfettered expression of the desire of the soldiers can hinder the war plans of the bourgeoisie and fascism.

For the same reason we demand that the fascist officers should be expelled from the army and that the reactionary general staffs should be subjected to democratic control, in the exercise of which workers' organisations should participate.

We put forward these demands in order in every possible way to hinder the advance of fascism where it is not yet in power. The very development of our policy of the united front and people's front demands it.

"A revolutionary army and a revolutionary government are two sides of the same medal. They are two institutions equally necessary for the success of the uprising and for the consolidation of its results. They are two slogans which must be advanced and explained as the only consistent revolutionary slogans."⁹

It is impossible to speak seriously of the formation of a government of the united front and people's front in order to bar the

way to fascism without at the same time raising the question of transforming the present bourgeois army into a people's army, organised on the basis of closest connection with the people, a reduction of length of service, measures for placing all arms at the disposal of the people and eliminating once for all the reactionary cadres from the army, especially from the higher commanding positions. By all these measures we only desire to destroy one of the supports of fascism and to restrain its war preparations.

At the present moment, therefore, these measures are particularly useful and necessary in those countries of Europe where an attack by German National-Socialism is threatening and where the prospect of a war of national liberation is a real one. In such circumstances the boldest measures for the democratisation of the army are absolutely essential. A war of national liberation waged by any small country against German National-Socialism can be victorious only if the army of the country is permeated by a revolutionary spirit.

Our principal task, therefore, is to link the army with the people. Hence we shall fight in defence of all partial demands of the soldiers—those demands which have been the starting point of all movements that have taken place in recent times among the masses of soldiers in bourgeois armies.

In fascist countries, every effort must be made to utilise the slightest opportunities for legal and semi-legal activity, linking the people, and especially the working class, with the mass of the soldiers. We must penetrate into and work within all mass organisations which serve for the militarisation of the youth.

In this connection, the theses of the Sixth Congress which state that Communists must not call upon young workers to join voluntary organisations for military training, must be interpreted in a broad fashion. In the present circumstances, it would be a mistake not to join such organisations in all countries in which they have assumed a mass character. We must enter these organisations, we must work in them.

A similar policy in general must be given regarding the organisation of defence against air attack, correcting the mistake of some Communist Parties, which adopted decisions for boycotting defence against air attack. We must regard the gas mask as a weapon of war like any other, which the workers must learn to make use of, and in this sphere we should put forward a number of immediate demands for the masses. For instance, we must demand that there should be no difference between the gas masks which the rich are able to buy and those within the reach

⁹ Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. III, p. 317, "Revolutionary Army and Revolutionary Government."

of the workers' purchasing power. We must demand that the best gas masks should be distributed free of charge among the toiling population. We must protest against the fact that it is only in the houses of the wealthy that gas shelters are being built, and so on. We must combine all our work in this direction with the propaganda and fight against war and for peace.

This new way of regarding our work in the army, as mass work, with a definite, positive content, aiming at the creation of a counter-balance to fascism in the army, is the best preparation for the practical application of the Bolshevik line at the moment when war breaks out. Communists at that moment must not call on the masses to boycott or refuse military service, but must join the army and make it the centre of their work. In view of the reality of the menace of war and in view of certain errors which have been committed, for instance, by the Italian Communist Party, we must repeat and stress this Bolshevik stand-point. We are not anarchists. Boycott of mobilisation, boycott of the army, sabotage in the factories, refusal of military service, and so on, these are not our methods of fighting war, because they separate us from the masses and can only help the bourgeoisie to strike still more savagely at the Communist vanguard.

X. THE FIGHT FOR PEACE AND THE FIGHT FOR REVOLUTION

Comrades, I am coming to the conclusion of my report.

In 1907, at the Stuttgart Congress of the pre-war Second International, a resolution was adopted on the struggle against war. This resolution was passed with an amendment proposed by Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, formulated as follows:

"If war should nevertheless break out, it is the duty of the Socialist Parties to work to bring it to an end as speedily as possible and to make every effort to use the economic and political crisis created by the war to waken the political consciousness of the masses and to hasten the downfall of capitalist domination."

As the continuers of all that was Marxist and revolutionary in the old, pre-war Second International, we bring forward the text of this amendment in the resolution on the struggle against war which we are putting before the Seventh Congress of the Communist International.

Nevertheless, one must clearly realise the essential difference that exists between the situation confronting us to-day and that of the labour movement at the time of the Stuttgart Congress,

when this amendment was passed. It is sufficient to point out that in 1907 reformism and centrism were already dominating forces in the old, pre-war Second International, a fact bound to lead to the collapse of August 4, when the leaders of Social-Democracy, almost without exception, took up the standpoint of defence of the bourgeois fatherland.

Only one party, the Bolshevik Party, endeavoured to utilise the economic and political crisis created by the war in order to hasten the downfall of capitalist domination; it put forward the slogan of converting the imperialist war into a civil war against the bourgeoisie and waged a consistent struggle for giving effect to this slogan. It is this example of the Bolshevik Party that we shall follow ourselves and which we shall call upon the working class to follow.

But what is the situation at the present day? The small Bolshevik Party of 1914 has become a great and glorious Party which has the power in its hands in the U.S.S.R., a Party which has become the leading section of the Communist International. Thanks to the victorious activity of the Bolshevik Party, the Party of Lenin and Stalin, we witness the growth and strengthening of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, where Socialism has irrevocably conquered. The Communist International has its Sections in all the big capitalist countries and in the majority of the colonial countries. Among the Sections of the Communist International is the Chinese Communist Party, which holds power on a territory with a population of 100 millions. In the course of 16 years of struggle against the bourgeoisie, against Social-Democracy, against Right and "Left" opportunism, all the Sections of the Communist International have become steeled. The Seventh Congress gives an example of the unparalleled ideological consolidation of our International. In some countries our Sections are already on the way to becoming transformed into real, Bolshevik mass parties.

The teaching of Lenin and Stalin on the struggle against imperialist war has not only been thoroughly studied throughout the international Communist movement, but it has already on a number of occasions found practical application in the post-war years. During the wars which have taken place during these years, many of our Parties have stood the test of battle. The struggle conducted by our French and German comrades during the occupation of the Ruhr, the heroic activity of our Japanese Party during the Japanese seizure of Manchuria and the attack on Shanghai, are examples which we can proudly show to the

working class. Finally, our Chinese Party has shown its ability not only to struggle against war but to organise and conduct a revolutionary war under the most difficult conditions. (*Applause.*)

Can we assert, on the basis of this experience, that there will be no wavering or mistakes in our ranks if war breaks out? It would be imprudent to draw such a conclusion, because we know that the moment when war breaks out is the moment when the bourgeoisie will strive to exert its greatest influence on the working class and when the Communist vanguard will encounter a number of great difficulties. That which we can assert is that, in contradistinction to 1914, there will be in all countries not a few isolated comrades, but a solid and disciplined vanguard which will remain loyal to the revolutionary teachings of Marxism-Leninism and which will undertake with all its power to apply these teachings in practice by following the example of the Russian Bolsheviks. This is a major fact, the importance of which the bourgeoisie will very soon understand.

But to-day, on the eve of the second cycle of revolutions and wars, the situation of the bourgeoisie itself differs profoundly from that of 1914. The power of the ruling classes was then still so firm that the bourgeoisie were able to govern everywhere according to the methods of parliamentary democracy. To-day, the capitalist world is so shaken by the decades of the general crisis and by the years of the world economic crisis that very great instability prevails in all the capitalist states. The fascist dictatorships to which the bourgeoisie has resort to consolidate its power intensify all the contradictions of capitalism and sharpen the class struggle in all countries to the highest degree. War may break out at a time when the discontent of the masses with the capitalist regime is becoming general and is extending widely among the middle strata; at a time when "the idea of taking capitalism by storm is maturing in the minds of the masses," at a time when the example of the U.S.S.R. is raising the ever-growing prestige of Socialism to unprecedented heights. In Asia, Africa, South America, the revolt of the colonial peoples already makes itself heard.

But what will the new war be like? Army officers, men of science and novelists have tried to depict the horrors of mechanised war, of chemical and bacteriological war. But we refrain from making any predictions because the most sensational discoveries are being kept secret and because it is difficult to conceive the degree of barbarity which the bourgeoisie are capable of reaching. The "small" wars which have been fought

during recent years in South America between the vassal states of Great Britain and the United States afford a terrible example in this matter. Paraguay, which has a population of a million, had 50,000 killed; Bolivia, with three and a half million inhabitants, had 70,000 killed; terrible figures compared with the corresponding losses of the big capitalist states during the World War. The war of these little countries was stopped because its horrors were so great that the whole population rose in revolt to put an end to it. And this was only a "small" war!

We cannot foresee what will take place when the most perfected means of destruction are put into operation on a mass scale. We know only that the next war will be a general war of all countries, a war in which there will be no distinction between front and rear, a war of destruction of everything which makes the life of a present-day cultured nation possible. The next war will be a war against the workers, against women and children; it will be a war of extermination. It will be a fascist war.

The last war lasted two or three years before there were cases of mass revolts of the soldiers at the front and of the population in the rear. Messieurs the bourgeoisie must not blame us if this time the interval will be much shorter and we realise that we shall be performing the greatest service to the whole of humanity by making it as short as possible. The most objective examination of the international situation and the mass movement, and of all their perspectives, inevitably brings us to the conclusion that for all capitalist countries the beginning of the war will denote the onset of a revolutionary crisis, and during this crisis we shall fight with all our strength at the head of the masses to convert the imperialist war into a civil war against the bourgeoisie, we shall fight for revolution and for the conquest of power. (*Applause.*)

But this prospect, comrades, does not mean that we shall have an easy task.

"The victory of revolution never comes by itself. It has to be prepared for and won. And only a strong proletarian revolutionary party can prepare for and win victory."¹⁰

These words of Comrade Stalin, the leader of the international proletariat, acquire a deep significance, especially just now when we speak of our tasks in case of the outbreak of a new world war.

¹⁰ *Socialism Victorious*, p. 16, Stalin's Speech at the Seventeenth Party Congress.

The difficulties which we encounter at present in our work will be but a trifle compared with those which will confront us when we shall have to fight against the bourgeoisie under war conditions.

"War is inevitably bound to awaken the most violent feelings among the masses which lead people to come out of their ordinary lethargy. If there is no correspondence between these new, sharp and violent feelings, revolutionary tactics are impossible." So Lenin wrote in 1915. All the revolutionary parties, except the Bolshevik Party, proved bankrupt before the task of leading the masses at a moment of extreme tension of all feelings and all class relationships.

What comes out of the huge revolt of French soldiers after the massacre of Chemin des Dames? What came out of the defeat and collapse of the Italian army at Caporetto in 1917? The defeat of the bourgeoisie and even the disintegration of the bourgeois army do not yet mean the victory of the revolution. The Bolsheviks were able to convert the defeat of the bourgeoisie and the disintegration of the tsarist army into the victory of the revolution only because they were connected with the masses of the soldiers and the masses of the people, because they had a political line which expressed the most profound aspirations of these masses.

Only the Bolsheviks proved capable of fulfilling the task of leading the masses at the moment of extreme accentuation of all class contradictions.

And here I would like to return to the question with which I started. During the last century, approximately up to the 'nineties, when the workers' movement was led directly by Marx and Engels, the working class had to take up its position on the problem of war under conditions when the bourgeoisie in a number of countries was still playing a progressive role connected with the development of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Marx and Engels took these conditions into account in each separate case in determining their attitude to a particular war.

When the period of imperialism began, this progressive role of the bourgeoisie disappeared, and the wars of the bourgeoisie changed their character and became imperialist wars. Those who have not understood this transformation have committed serious mistakes and crimes towards the working class.

The existence of the Soviet Union is a new factor of world-historical significance which introduces radical modifications in the character of the entire period of development through which

we are passing. All our tactics in case of war must be determined by taking this factor into consideration. Already, in the theses of the Sixth World Congress it was laid down that in case of war against the Soviet Union, the slogan of fraternisation must give place to the slogan of deserting to the side of the Red Army. In the theses of the Sixth World Congress it is stated that in case of an imperialist war against the Soviet Union

"... the tactics and choice of the means of struggle [of the proletariat] must be determined not only by the interests of the class struggle in their own country, but by the interests of the war at the front, which is a class war of the bourgeoisie against the proletarian state."

In the resolution which we are putting before our Seventh Congress, we make these instructions still more precise by declaring that *in case of a counter-revolutionary war against the Soviet Union, the Communists must call on all the toilers to help by all means and at any cost to bring about the victory of the Red Army against the imperialist armies.* (Applause.)

I think that this line is sufficiently clear; it corresponds to the feelings of millions of toilers. And if someone asks us what is the meaning of this line and how we shall act in the various concrete cases of war that may possibly arrive, we have only one reply to give—in each case we shall act as Marxists, as Bolsheviks; in other words, we shall begin by an exact appraisal of the concrete situation, of the character of the war which is about to be fought, of the relations of class forces at each given moment, of the extent of our forces and the forces of our adversaries, and on the basis of an exact estimate of the position we shall decide our immediate perspectives and the concrete forms of our work. We shall never lose sight of the fact that one of the chief qualities of a Bolshevik is that of being able to unite the greatest loyalty to principles with the greatest capacity of manœuvring and the greatest flexibility.

Look at the example given by our comrades of the Chinese Red Army. Forced by the attack of the reactionary troops into a situation which seemed hopeless, they succeeded, by temporarily abandoning the provinces which they could no longer hold, in shifting the struggle to other districts and in winning as a result still greater and more solid positions than those which they previously possessed. In this heroic 3,000 kilometre march of the Chinese Red Army through the provinces of Central China, what is remarkable is not only the heroism of its participants but also their outstanding political maturity and the flexibility of their

manceuvres. (*Applause.*) Only a party educated in a Bolshevik spirit could conceive and carry through such a truly Leninist manœuvre. May all our parties be able to show the same Bolshevik qualities in time of war. May all our parties henceforth work to acquire them. It is from this angle of vision that they should analyse their weaknesses and subject them to criticism.

I would like to say, for instance, to the comrades of the Communist Party of Germany: "Are you sufficiently connected with the masses of young toilers whom German fascism is on the point of converting into cannon-fodder?" No, you are not yet sufficiently connected with these masses of the youth, nor with the workers of your war factories, nor with the peasants of your villages; you are not able to feel sure that when war breaks out, these masses will take the path of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, which you are pointing out to them. You will have to carry out a great and difficult, truly Bolshevik work to wrest these masses from the influence of chauvinism.

I want to say to our Spanish comrades: we have praised you for the heroism of your fighters at the barricades. But perhaps you would have performed a greater service to all the Parties of the Communist International and to our Congress, you who passed so recently through the fire of civil war, if you had severely criticised the conduct of your organisations during the days of street fighting. You would, perhaps, have arrived at the conclusion that your organisations as such were not equal to the height of the teachings of Marx and Lenin on the art of insurrection, that they did not understand that it was not a question merely of dying like heroes at the barricades but of leading the fight of the masses as a whole, of never losing the initiative and of being able to wrest the leadership from the hands of wavering elements who could only surrender at the first difficulties. If you had subjected your action during the street battles to a severe criticism, you would have given great help to the comrades of other countries in understanding how great is the difficulty of the task of converting imperialist war into civil war against the bourgeoisie, how great is the difficulty of carrying out the tasks facing the Communist Party during civil war. (*Applause.*)

I would also like to say to our comrades of the French Communist Party: you have been able with your courageous tactical turn to raise high our banner in your country. This imposes on you a great obligation, not only before us but before the masses. The class struggle goes forward. It is necessary to be equal to the tasks which history imposes on us. In case of war these tasks

will be extremely difficult, extremely complicated for you. You possess revolutionary traditions, such as the example of the Jacobins of 1793, of Robespierre and Carnot, who were able simultaneously to carry on civil war within the country and beat back the attack of reaction at the frontiers. You have the revolutionary tradition of the Paris Commune, which was able to raise high the flag of the defence of the country and which transformed it into the banner of defence of the revolution. But, in taking the path traced out by the Commune, we do not want to be defeated again, we want to conquer! For this it is necessary to have the support of the masses of workers, peasants and petty bourgeoisie, of the entire people of France. We must have a steel leadership, a truly Leninist-Stalinist Party, equal to its great historical task. I would like to say all the comrades of all the Communist Parties represented here:

War will be a very complicated political matter, but at the same time it will be a very simple and concrete matter as far as concerns the conditions in which we shall have to work and fight. Enthusiasm alone will not avail. There will, perhaps, even be no written resolutions. There will be the factory and the trenches, where it will be necessary to decide without waverings the most difficult problems, because all waverings will cost us dear. It is therefore necessary from to-day for us to educate all our Parties, all organisations, all cadres, every Party member, in the spirit of maximum initiative and personal responsibility. This can only be attained as the result of the widest ideological preparation and the closest contact with the masses.

To-day we are a great army which is fighting for peace. We cannot foresee and no one can foresee how long our struggle for peace can continue. It may be a year, it may be more, it may be only a few months. We must be ready at any moment.

Our Congress has traced out a Leninist line of action this is already a first guarantee of victory. We have a great force, the Bolshevik Party. We have a leader, Comrade Stalin (*applause*), of whom we know that he has always, in the most difficult moments, found the line which has led to victory, our leader, Comrade Stalin, who, during the years of civil war, was sent by Lenin to all the fronts where victory seemed to be escaping the toilers of the U.S.S.R. And everywhere, from Perm to Tsaritsin, from Petrograd to the Southern front, Stalin re-established the position, defeated the enemy, and assured victory. (*Applause.*)

The world party of the Bolsheviks and of Stalin is the guarantee of our victory on a world scale. Let us close our ranks,

comrades, in the fight against imperialist war, for peace, for the defence of the Soviet Union.

Raise high the banner of proletarian internationalism, the banner of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin!

Long live the triumph of the revolution of Socialism throughout the world! (Prolonged, stormy applause. The delegates stand and greet Comrade Ercoli. The "Internationale" is sung. All the delegations shout their greetings. Cries of "Hurrah!" a prolonged ovation.)

SPEECH IN REPLY TO THE DISCUSSION, 22ND DAY, 41ST SESSION,
AUGUST 17, 1935

[The delegates stand and greet the appearance of Comrade Ercoli on the platform; they give him an ovation and sing the "Internationale."]

Comrades, the very character of the discussions on the danger of a new imperialist war and on the Communist International's fight against this danger makes it possible for me to limit my reply to the discussion to a minimum.

In point of fact, all the representatives of the revolutionary movement of the entire capitalist world and the colonial countries who have spoken in the discussion have declared their full agreement with the line of my report and with the analysis how the danger of a new imperialist war is maturing, and how the bourgeoisie, and especially the most reactionary parties of the bourgeoisie—German National-Socialism, the Japanese militarists, Italian fascism, the extreme war parties of the bourgeoisie throughout the world—are preparing a new imperialist war.

All the comrades have shown by their speeches that they are in full agreement with the fundamental point of my report; I have in mind that close connection which exists at the present time between our fight for peace and against imperialist war and our fight against fascism.

At the present moment the danger of war threatens concretely from three sides: from German National-Socialism, from imperialist Japan and from Italian fascism. These are the most reactionary states; they are states that have either abolished the regime of bourgeois democracy or that have never possessed it, states striving for war, desiring war, already waging war.

Capitalist reaction is war; fascism is war. This is what actual reality demonstrates to us now.

By concentrating the forces of the Communist vanguard of the working class against fascism, we create the necessary conditions for the success of our fight against war and for peace.

Comrade Dimitrov, in his historic report made to our Congress, pointed out for the Communist International and the world proletariat the line of effective struggle against fascism as also the basic line of our fight against war and for peace.

One of the defects of the discussion was that the speeches of all those taking part bore, perhaps, too much of a general character, that it was not shown concretely in the speeches what must be the nature of our struggle against war at the present time.

At the present day we are already face to face with war. Japan is waging war against China; nevertheless, the majority of the Communist Parties still neglect the tasks of the fight for defence of the Chinese Revolution.

Some comrades, by the way, put forward in the discussion a special question of a tactical character. This is the question of our attitude to gas-mask exercises which are being carried on now in all capitalist countries, and in which workers as well as, in general, the whole civil population are being compelled to participate.

We must decide this question in accordance with our general line in the struggle against war. I said, and I repeat, that we must not take the standpoint of boycotting gas-mask exercises in general. That would surely be a deviation on the side of narrow, sectarian and even anarchistic anti-militarism, which could only bar our way to establishing connections with the wide masses.

Gas masks are just as much a weapon as any other. The gas mask is a weapon of a defensive character; it can be employed during civil war since poison gases belong to the type of weapons which the bourgeoisie make use of in the struggle against the working class for dispersing demonstrations, and during strikes. And we must know how to defend ourselves from this barbarous weapon of the bourgeoisie.

It would also be incorrect to justify the attitude of boycott by the argument that gas masks are of no use. Such an assertion only facilitates the spreading of the untrue opinion that the development of military-technical resources has now reached such a level as to make defence, and therefore war too, impossible. There are pacifists who adhere to this mistaken point of view, but we must firmly stand by our own.

Workers who are threatened by gas attacks in any war, including in civil war, are entitled to ask us: why should we not prepare ourselves for this war also?

Utilising the gas-mask exercises conducted by the bourgeoisie, we must put forward a number of immediate demands which

would link us with the masses and develop the struggle of the masses for peace and against war.

The more important and more general question of the prospects of a war of national defence in Europe, and of the position of the proletariat in such a case, was raised in the speech of Comrade de Leov. The prospect of a war of national liberation concerns not only the Dutch Party but also a number of other Parties, and we must welcome as a sign of political maturity the fact that the representatives of all the parties concerned adopted a correct Marxian position on this question.

The prospect of the possibility of national wars in Europe even in the period of imperialism was put forward by Lenin as early as 1916 in his polemic with Rosa Luxemburg on the question of her pamphlet published under the pseudonym of Junius. Rosa Luxemburg denied the possibility of national wars because the world was completely divided up between several imperialist "big" powers; from which it follows, she maintained, that every war, even if at the beginning it has a national character, becomes an imperialist war inasmuch as it inevitably touches on the interests of one of the imperialist powers or imperialist coalitions. Answering Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin pointed out that from the purely theoretical point of view it was impossible to deny the hypothesis of the conversion even of the World War of 1914 into a national war. Then, reviewing the problem of the concrete possibility of national wars in Europe, Lenin pointed out that such wars would be possible especially in the case of the victory of the revolution in Russia and of the extreme exhaustion of the forces of the big powers in the war of 1914, and that national wars against the imperialist powers are, in this case, not only possible and probable but are inevitable and will have a progressive, revolutionary character.

The situation which we are facing at the present time has much in common with that which Lenin foresaw as early as 1916.

The victory of the revolution in Russia is a fact; the extreme weakening of the big imperialist powers after the war is also a fact; but in addition we have also fascism, German National-Socialism, which threatens with its bayonets the freedom and national independence of a number of small peoples in Europe. Hence, we must not only confirm the prospect outlined by Lenin in 1916, but also emphasise the tasks which arise before our Parties inasmuch as this prospect becomes real.

In the theses of the Sixth World Congress it is emphasised that participation in a national-liberation war and support of it signi-

fies that the proletariat, in supporting such a war, undertakes "temporary co-operation with the bourgeoisie." But this temporary co-operation must never lead to renouncing the class struggle, i.e., it cannot and must not ever be a reformist co-operation. It is the more necessary to stress this because the bourgeoisie, as we know, even if it is compelled at a given moment to take up arms in defence of national independence and freedom, is always ready to go over to the camp of the adversary in face of the danger of the war being converted into a people's war and of a mighty upsurge of the masses of workers and peasants demanding the satisfaction of their class demands.

By defending the national freedom of small countries, threatened by imperialist aggression, we shall defend everything that is progressive in the national sentiment of the small people's struggling for their independence, but we shall decisively refuse to undertake defence of the reactionary policy of the bourgeoisie. No other policy of defending the national independence of the small peoples is possible. In Europe there exist such small countries as Holland and Belgium whose national independence is clearly menaced by a predatory and interventionist war of German National-Socialism. At the same time, the bourgeoisie of these countries oppresses an extensive colonial empire. There is not the slightest doubt that in these countries our policy of defence of national freedom must never be separated from real struggle for the liberation of the oppressed and exploited peoples of the colonies. "A people that wishes to be free may not make other peoples its slaves." Guided by these words of Marx, we prove by our whole-hearted struggle for the widest application of the principle of national self-determination in all countries that the working class is the sole progressive force on which to base a policy of active counteraction to the fascist tyranny threatening all nations.

The questions raised by the British and Dutch comrades are in themselves important, big questions, but they are partial, concrete questions of our tactics.

Finally, it is essential to emphasise the factor that at the present time is at the centre of the problems of the fight against war and is directly connected with the perspective that we, in fighting for peace, put forward not only before ourselves but before the working class and toilers of the whole world.

We have analysed the new features of the international situation. We have singled out the most important of them. We must emphasise with all our force that the review of these factors

in their totality leads us to the conclusion that our fight for peace is not only necessary but that at the present time it has also such chances of success as never previously existed.

In affirming this, we do not by any means change our Marxist point of view in the question of war. We know and confirm that war is a requirement of the capitalist regime, that capitalism cannot develop without enveloping the peoples in the horrors of war.

There have been certain so-called "Marxists" who attempted to slur over or to revise this position, asserting that capitalism could "organise" and develop along a peaceful path. All these opportunist theories of the possibility of a peaceful "organised" development of capitalism have long ago suffered shipwreck. On the other hand, however, as we know, there were and still exist tendencies to take up a fatalist position. This position is a consequence of the distortion of the exact meaning of the Marxian assertion of the impossibility of separating war from the capitalist regime.

This fatalist point of view leads to the fight for peace being considered impossible, devoid of all prospects, a hopeless fight which has no chance of success as long as the capitalist regime exists.

The consequence of this false position was also that narrow sectarian character, confined within the limits of propaganda alone, which stamped the anti-war struggle of our Parties throughout a long period.

They limited themselves to propaganda against war solely within the ranks of the vanguard of the working class, starting out from the point of view that only this vanguard could be convinced of the inevitability of war under the capitalist regime. This led to the loss of connections with the widest masses which, on entering into the struggle, desire to have before them a prospect of a successful outcome of this struggle. Under these conditions, our fight against war could not have the requisite success. Taking into account the whole totality of the new features which characterise the present situation, we must correct these mistakes.

What are these new features?

1. The existence of the Soviet Union—of a country in which the working class, being in possession of power, uses this power for defence of peace and for preservation of peace, both in the interests of the building of Socialism in the Soviet Union and in

the interests of the toiling masses of the whole world, in the interests of civilisation and the progress of humanity.

This point of support (of tremendous significance in our struggle for peace) gives this struggle a prospect of success such as never previously existed.

2. Profound forces of the working class have come into movement; in an ever-widening front they are coming out against the capitalist regime, fighting for their urgent demands, fighting against fascism. They are striving for the unification of their forces in this fight. This impulse of the masses towards unity in the fight against fascism, which is at the same time an urge towards unity in the fight against war, is now compelling even the leaders of the Second International to revise their position.

In a few days the Executive Committee of the Second International will meet in Brussels and will once again discuss a solution of the problems that confront us, the question of what position ought to be adopted by the working class in the fight against war.

All that remains for us is to express the hope that at this session of the Executive Committee persons will be found who will be able to reflect the ever-strengthening desire of the masses of Social-Democratic workers for struggle for peace, and who will be able to give real expression to this desire for struggle, not only by framing new resolutions on this question, but also by drawing all the necessary conclusions so that the war-mongers will be opposed by a mighty united front of struggle not only of the workers but also of the widest masses of toilers.

3. Hatred of imperialist war is growing not only among the masses of workers, but also among the masses of the petty bourgeoisie, among the intellectuals. Never was hatred of war so deep and powerful as now.

Consequently, the possibility exists of drawing into the fight for peace those strata that up to now have not participated in political fights and that constitute a considerable force capable of coming out against the instigator of war—fascism.

4. Finally, we have shown that at the present time deep divergencies exist within the front itself of the imperialists. Alongside the capitalist states that are the chief instigators of war, there exist also bourgeois states that are interested in the preservation of peace, and small countries that desire to defend peace because they have every ground for fearing an attack on their independence on the part of German National-Socialism.

In virtue of all these causes, a new situation is taking shape

before the working class. The front of struggle against war and for peace can now be organised not only as a front of the vanguard of the working class struggling for the overthrow of the capitalist regime. We can now draw new forces into this front. This front includes, on the one hand, the whole mass of toilers of the state in which power is in the hands of the proletariat. This state gives the masses a magnificent example how to fight for peace and to preserve it. For that reason it has an army that stands for defence of peace. On the other hand, we must draw into the front of the fight for peace the working class of all countries where power is still in the hands of the capitalists.

We can draw into the front of struggle for peace the masses of Social-Democratic toilers and wide masses of pacifists, Catholics, women, youth, national minorities that find themselves menaced, and their organisations. We can draw into the ranks of this front even those bourgeois governments which at the present moment are interested in the preservation of peace.

Under such circumstances, we must in concluding the discussion on this point of the agenda of our Congress, boldly put forward the following perspective: that it is not only possible to postpone war but that it is possible also to prevent the outbreak of a new imperialist war.

But for this prospect to become real, our whole fight against war must take on a character profoundly different from that which it previously possessed.

We must break through the narrow bounds of the former anti-war and anti-militarist work, we must give our fight for peace the widest character, as far as possible embracing the whole of the people.

Take the peace ballot held in England which mobilised eleven million persons. Here is an example which our comrades should follow, here is an initiative which the British comrades should have taken into their own hands in order to put themselves at the head of the masses of people desirous of defending peace.

Of course, comrades, we have to deal with a monstrous enemy, with fascism, that holds power in its hands in a number of countries and utilises this power in order to make propaganda for war, to prepare it and wage it. But we know, Comrade Dimitrov showed us, and all actual reality is a witness of it for us, that the power of fascism is unstable, undermined by very deep internal contradictions, and by no means guaranteed against the outbreak of class struggle.

If the German working class, led by its Communist Party, on

uniting its forces and putting itself at the head of all the anti-fascist forces of the country, could deliver a mortal blow to the National-Socialist regime, only think, comrades, what colossal consequences this fact would have for the entire international situation.

From the point of view of the prospects of war this would radically change the situation for the working class of the whole world. It would open up a new path and new possibilities for our fight for peace.

Hence a very great responsibility before the toilers of the whole world is borne by those Parties that are struggling in the countries of fascist dictatorship in the first place, our German, Italian and Japanese comrades. Every success of their struggle opens up new prospects for our fight for peace.

No less responsibility falls on the Communist Parties of all the other countries. They have the obligation to implant the following conviction deeply into the masses: the fight for peace has chances of success if only all enemies of war, all friends of peace, forces of the working class, forces of the wide masses of the petty-bourgeoisie, intellectuals, threatened national minorities, and the states themselves that are interested at the present moment in the preservation of peace, join together and oppose a mighty front against the instigators and inciters of war.

In giving this new scope to our fight for peace and opening up such a prospect of success and victory for it, we do not in the slightest degree alter our Marxist position on the questions of war and peace.

We know that in the struggle between the war parties and the forces of peace, the very fate of the capitalist regime is at stake.

To avoid war, to preserve peace for as long as possible—means at the same time to act in the interests of the cause of socialism. Under conditions of peace, the forces of Socialism, which are the forces of progress, are consolidated and advance onwards.

We shall convey to the whole world our profound conviction that the preservation of peace is possible, that it is possible to hinder war, that under definite conditions to avoid war is a thing that is possible and realisable. On the basis of this conviction we shall gather around us millions of persons for the struggle for the great, most just and most Socialist cause—the cause of peace.

The Bolshevik Party, led by our Comrade Stalin, which is the most consistent revolutionary Party of all parties that have ever existed, gives us an example of consistent struggle for peace conducted under the most difficult conditions and nevertheless crowned with success.

May the fight of the whole Communist International for peace develop with the same consistency, with the same courage, with the same determination and with the same enthusiasm—then it also will be crowned with the same success!

Our banner is the banner of the fight for peace. We shall raise this banner before the millions of toilers of the whole world! We shall defend it from the fascists, from all the war-mongers! Herein lies for us the most certain guarantee that the millions of toilers will to-morrow follow us to the struggle for revolution and Socialism!

(*Prolonged applause, developing into an ovation; the delegates stand and sing "Bandiera Rossa."*)

FURTHER SPEECHES AT THE CONGRESS

The C.P. of France Fight for the People's Front. Marcel Cachin id.

The Successes of the Anti-Fascist United Front. Maurice Thorez 2d.

For Peace! For the Defence of the Soviet Union. André Marty id.